

# Andrew Delbanco College What It Was Is And Should Be Pdf

Andrew Delbanco College What It Was Is And Should Be Pdf Andrew Delbanco's College What It Was Is and Should Be A Review

Andrew Delbanco's *College What It Was Is and Should Be* is a thought-provoking and timely exploration of the American higher education system. Delbanco, a renowned scholar and professor, takes readers on a journey through the history of college, analyzing its origins, its current state, and its potential future. This review will delve into the book's key arguments, its strengths and weaknesses, and its relevance to contemporary debates about the value and purpose of higher education.

Delbanco's *Critique of the Current State of College*

Delbanco argues that American college has lost its way, becoming a fragmented and overly specialized institution driven by market forces rather than intellectual pursuit. He criticizes the current emphasis on professional training, vocational skills, and economic outcomes, arguing that these priorities have overshadowed the core values of a liberal arts education: critical thinking, intellectual curiosity, and the development of ethical citizenship. Delbanco laments the declining emphasis on reading, writing, and discussion, arguing that these fundamental skills are essential for students to engage with complex ideas and contribute meaningfully to society.

A Historical Perspective on College

Delbanco provides a fascinating historical overview of college, tracing its roots to the medieval universities and its evolution in the United States. He examines how college has shifted from a place of religious and moral formation to a secular institution focused on intellectual development and civic engagement. He highlights the key figures and movements that shaped the American college experience, including the rise of the land-grant universities and the influx of students from diverse backgrounds.

Delbanco's Vision for the Future of College

Despite his critiques, Delbanco remains optimistic about the potential for college to reclaim

its core values and contribute to a more just and equitable society He calls for a renewed focus on the liberal arts emphasizing the importance of critical thinking creative expression and the ability to navigate complex ethical dilemmas He advocates for a more holistic approach to education that recognizes the value of both academic rigor and personal growth

**Strengths of the Book** **Compelling Argument** Delbanco's arguments are well-researched and convincingly presented drawing on a wealth of historical evidence and contemporary insights **Provocative Analysis** The book challenges conventional assumptions about college forcing readers to confront the shortcomings of the current system and reconsider the true purpose of higher education **Engaging Writing Style** Delbanco's writing is clear engaging and accessible to a wide audience He weaves together personal anecdotes historical narratives and philosophical insights to create a thought-provoking and compelling narrative

**Weaknesses of the Book** **Lack of Concrete Solutions** While Delbanco offers a powerful critique of the current state of college he provides limited concrete solutions for how to address the challenges he identifies **Oversimplification of Complex Issues** Some readers may find Delbanco's analysis overly simplistic particularly regarding the complex social and economic factors that influence higher education **Focus on Elite Institutions** Delbanco's primary focus on elite institutions like Harvard and Yale may not fully capture the diverse experiences and challenges of community colleges and public universities **Relevance to Contemporary Debates** Delbanco's *College What It Was Is and Should Be* remains relevant today as higher education continues to face significant challenges The book provides a valuable framework for understanding the historical and cultural forces that have shaped the American college experience and for navigating the ongoing debates about the purpose and value of higher education

**Conclusion** *College What It Was Is and Should Be* is a timely and thought-provoking exploration of the American higher education system Delbanco's insightful critique and hopeful vision provide a valuable contribution to the ongoing conversation about the future of college While his arguments may not fully address all the complexities of the issue his book offers a compelling and essential starting point for anyone seeking to understand the past present and potential future of this fundamental institution





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