



Fitting Form to Function: A Primer on the Organization of Academic Institutions

Rudolph H. Weingartner

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Institutions of higher education are not like corporations: they have multiple goals, not even limited to the central ones of teaching and research, nor are they organized hierarchically. One class of leading inhabitants, faculty members, are a cross between independent contractors and employees; another class, administrators, are a cross between bosses and colleagues. *Fitting Form to Function* discusses how such institutions are best organized; how decisions are best made at various levels; how administrators and faculty can effectively collaborate in giving shape to a university or college. The book takes up such topics as the office of the president, of the provost, the dean and the chairperson of a department. It considers how committees are formed to function effectively—from a faculty senate to budget and planning committees to those that advise on promotions and others that adjudicate when there are grievances. *Fitting Form to Function* is written in an informal style. No jargon, no footnotes, but sporting 27 recurring maxims, such as Maxim 1, In academic institutions, the forces of nature are centrifugal; organizational art must be used to create propensities toward coherence; Maxim 17, Boundaries are less likely to create solidarity among those who live within them than they constitute barriers for those residing outside them; and Maxim 23, 'A' people hire (or retain) 'A' people, while 'B' people hire 'C' people.

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