

# Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development

---

Volume 10 | Number 10

Article 14

---

2011

## Governance and the Public Good

Andre Broquard  
*John Brown University*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd\\_growth](https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd_growth)



Part of the [Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons](#), [Educational Leadership Commons](#), [Higher Education Commons](#), [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), and the [Teacher Education and Professional Development Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Broquard, Andre (2011) "Governance and the Public Good," *Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development*. Vol. 10 : No. 10 , Article 14.

Available at: [https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd\\_growth/vol10/iss10/14](https://pillars.taylor.edu/acsd_growth/vol10/iss10/14)

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Christians in Student Development at Pillars at Taylor University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Growth: The Journal of the Association for Christians in Student Development by an authorized editor of Pillars at Taylor University. For more information, please contact [pillars@taylor.edu](mailto:pillars@taylor.edu).

## **Tierney, W. G. (Ed.). (2006). *Governance and the public good.***

Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Reviewed by André Broquard

### **Abstract**

As people who are deeply engaged in the developmental aspects of college students' lives, Student Affairs professionals may have a limited perspective of higher education as whole. It is important that time is given to understand the issues and concerns that are presented in higher education. *Governance and the public good*, edited by William Tierney, provides the practitioner with a broad landscape of the current landscape of American higher education.

It is important for Student Affairs professionals to be literate in student development theories and current student trends. Working with students on a daily basis requires a solid knowledge and understanding of the developmental stages of growth. Equally as important, but often overlooked, is literacy in issues concerning general higher education structure and operation. One such area of limited understanding for Student Affairs practitioners is institutional governance. In particular, we fail to develop a wide institutional perspective concerning the aspects and developments of higher education governance. In reviewing *Governance and the public good*, edited by William Tierney, I found a valuable description of the current state of higher education governance and helpful description of institutional governance.

Tierney and the ten co-authors provide a relevant review on higher education governance and its impact on the student and society. Each chapter is beneficial in adding to the ongoing conversation concerning the structure and leadership of higher education. In the introduction, Tierney offers a framework for the discussion by recognizing three trends and two tensions that face higher education. The trends consist of privatization, politicization, and restructuring. The tensions are accountability and autonomy.

Privatization has most significantly impacted the funding of public institutions and, in turn, tuition levels. According to Tierney, this trend is a result of a shift in assumption "that education is a public good toward a belief that it is a private benefit" (p. 5). This philosophical development has led to institutions and specifically the individual student owning a larger share of the cost of education. The trend of politicization is borne out of institutional constituencies vying for increased involvement with the governance of the institution. This includes broad of trustees, regents, and state legislators but also involves the administrative and faculties bodies. If higher education is a public good, then each constituent may be entitled to input. However, if higher education takes on a private benefit the involvement of outside constituencies is limited. The trend of restructuring acknowledges the rise of the higher education "administration and bureaucracy" (Tierney, 2006, p. 7) in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the last decade, the restructuring has resulted in a greater administrative presence and less faculty involvement.

It does not take much involvement in higher education to be a part of conversations regarding the two tensions of accountability and autonomy. Government officials on the state and federal level are calling for accountability in higher education. Parents and students have become more aware of their return on investment and are demanding greater input and service from the institution. At the same time, institutions are working to keep academic and administrative autonomy. The quest for accountability is often seen as a threat to autonomy. However, if higher education is a public good, then external voices need to be regarded while the institution maintains academic discretion.

The other chapters in the book elaborate on these five themes. The authors are all excellent sources, providing first-hand experience with the subject. They each address the framework of the trend and tensions. There is not total agreement on how institutional governance should respond to the current situation, but the authors' viewpoints are complementary. The various perspectives are helpful for the higher education practitioner in understanding the climate surrounding higher education as well as the important elements and entities involved in the governance process. In reviewing the references for each chapter, it is clear that along with being knowledgeable of the subject, the authors refer to solid literature on which they built their arguments. Each reference list provides excellent resources for further study.

Judith A. Ramsey provides a foundational chapter describing the higher education institution of the future. She asserts that mutual engagement is necessary on the part of all higher education constituents: academic and administrative leaders, executive leadership, governing boards, and legislative leaders. It will only be through agreement and cooperation that higher education will continue to contribute to the public good.

A particularly useful chapter is "Lost in transition: Governing in a time of privatization," by Karen Whitney. Whitney reviews the nature of privatization in three related, but unique ways: as an event, as a process, and as a continuum. As she writes about higher education governance, she provides helpful history and philosophy that have contributed to the current movement toward privatization. Privatization "is defined as the shifting proportion of public, state-appropriated funds to non-state sources such as student tuition and fees, contracts for services and grants, and gifts as the principal institutional funding sources" (p. 31). Ultimately, as the privatization of higher education takes place, it will demand institutional leaders to find effective means in which to partner with state leaders to guide the university or college successfully. Institutions will need to "negotiate" (p. 44) with state leaders to determine the balance between funding and autonomy.

There are two chapters that describe governing boards and provide foundational knowledge. Jane V. Wellman writes a chapter entitled "Rethinking state governance of higher education" and David A. Longanecker contributes a chapter entitled "The 'new' new challenge of governance by governing boards." These two chapters are primers on state governance—which includes both governmental and institutional structures. They provide clear definitions and descriptions of the responsibilities of state governing bodies. Wellman recognizes the political and policy pressures that governing boards experience. The pressure caused by the shift toward privatization is highlighted with the review of three states—Virginia, Colorado, and Washington State. Longanecker answers three basic but vital questions in his chapter. Who governs? To whom is the board member obligated? What is governed? In answering these questions, Longanecker

identifies board members as laypeople selected or elected because of their influence to focus on the institutional and student concerns. Again, these chapters serve as helpful tutorials on state governance of higher education and provide an understanding of the important issues surrounding higher education.

Jay Dee, in a chapter entitled “Institutional autonomy and state-level accountability,” discusses the need to balance the paradoxical concepts of accountability and autonomy. After defining the terms within the higher education context, Dee applies the organizational concept of “loose coupling” (p. 134) to the situation. He believes that the state-institution relationship can hold both institutional accountability and autonomy in balance through “shared commitments” and “trust” (pp. 149, 150). Dee recommends five structures that proactively pursue a cooperative arrangement to achieve the delicate balance of accountability and autonomy.

*Governance and the public good* is an excellent resource. It will provide anyone interested in higher education who desires further knowledge, perspective, and understanding of higher education governance a firm foundation. Tierney has contributed a worthwhile resource to the literature base of higher education governance, especially for the Student Affairs practitioner.

*André Broquard serves as the Dean of Students at John Brown University. He holds a Master of Arts in Management from Regent University and is an Ed.D. candidate in Higher Education at the University of Arkansas.*