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*The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys
Its Way into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the
Gates (review)*

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examples of corporate endowed chairs, that, "The impact of these developments . . . has not yet been explored by researchers. However, the corrupting influence of money is a well known problem" (p. 133).

Regrettably, *Open for Business* does not take up the challenge of undertaking such an exploration, even on a limited basis. Nor does it really offer insights that go beyond a range of other contributions to the literature on the topics at hand, on which it draws liberally. That is too bad. Because I think that the general issues raised by the authors are important ones. The range of sectors within the university in which the logic of the market is in my view increasingly embedded, is remarkable and worthy of consideration and exploration that helps reveal what some of the costs and benefits (and of where and to whom these costs and benefits are incurred) of commercialization are.

The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates, by Daniel Golden. New York: Crown, 2006. 298 pp. \$25.95. ISBN 1400097967.

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The admissions process for colleges and universities in the United States has been a mystery to many. How are choices made? How do certain students find themselves admitted and others turned away? Those who have faith in the system want to believe in a fair, unbiased, and equal opportunity into higher education. Daniel Golden's book, *The Price of Admission: How America's Ruling Class Buys Its Way into Elite Colleges—and Who Gets Left Outside the Gates*, reveals a hidden side admissions officers do not want you to see, and that there is more to admissions than SAT scores and grade point average. In some cases these numbers may not make a difference at all.

In his book, Golden describes the admissions practices of several of the nation's elite colleges and universities, from special privileges for children of alumni and legacies, to wealthy donors who are "friends" of the university. *The Price of Admission* incorporates personal stories of those who are privileged and those who get "left behind," from the recruitment of student athletes who play "upper class" sports, to higher standards for Asian Americans. Some of the stories and facts are appalling, while others are simply heartbreaking and leave the reader dumbfounded. Golden provides insight into how universities have become a huge business where dollars and prestige overshadow the focus on student learning and discovery.

Golden's writing style makes the book an easy read and one difficult to pull away from. The chapters are organized into distinct sections, yet each flows sensibly into one after another. The first four chapters, "How the 'Z-List' Makes the A-List," "Recruiting the Rich," "The Fame Factor," and "Enduring Legacies," focus primarily on examples of four institutions: Harvard, Duke, Brown, and Notre Dame respectively. His presentation shifts as subsequent chapters

focus on one topic with supporting evidence from various colleges and universities. Title IX, faculty children, Asian Americans, and Congress are discussed in greater detail.

Golden's most compelling case is made in chapter 9, "The Challenge of Wealth Blind Admissions," when Golden provides examples of universities, such as Cal Tech, Cooper Union, and Berea, that serve students and the public without compromising admissions standards for legacies or other special cases. All have survived throughout the years, raising money from donors who expect nothing in return and from government grants which aid the American public.

However, the reader needs to question whether the schools highlighted in Golden's book are representative of all institutions across the country. For one, most of the schools mentioned are private institutions, with very little evidence to support the same claims to their public school counterparts. The reader wonders how prevalent legacy and other privileged applicants infiltrate the entire higher education system. Second, as a native of the East Coast, Golden has gathered most of his information from schools located in the Northeast. Focusing on schools in this geographic area does not provide for a diversified argument or one that could be used when speaking generally. Lastly, the Ivy League schools are a major focus in this book but only represent a small percentage of the students who enroll in higher education.

Golden is clear to communicate his overarching theme which argues for anti-legacy policies and emphasizes the accountability necessary to facilitate an equal playing field within the admissions process. He closes by explaining the heart of the matter revolves around students earning their right to a spot in an elite university, academically, athletically or otherwise, on their own merits and not someone else's.

His final chapter, Golden offers suggestions for reform which leaves the reader a bit unsatisfied and immobile to the deeply rooted "traditions" of some of the nation's oldest and most prestigious institutions. To be fair, Golden rightfully urges a call for action for an intolerably significant and pressing issue.

The Price of Admission would be appropriate for anyone interested in college or university admissions. Parents and their high school students would also benefit from learning the harsh realities at some of the nation's most prestigious schools. Hopefully by reading this, admissions counselors would be challenged to evaluate their current admission policies. The practices discussed in this book should also be incorporated in courses for graduate students studying higher education as they would benefit from learning the challenges they may face as future universities leaders.

After Admission: From College Access to College Success,
by James E. Rosenbaum, Regina Deil-Amen, and Ann E. Person.
New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2006. 267 pp.
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James E. Rosenbaum, Regina Deil-Amen, and Ann E. Person's *After Admission: From College Access to College Success* is an elaboration and extension of