

Austerity Blues: The Fight for the Soul of Public Higher Education
Michael Fabricant and Stephen Brier Graduate Center, City University of New York
BOOK REVIEWS

"Austerity politics have fundamentally altered American public higher education; yet, its influence has largely escaped public attention. In the true spirit of scholar-activism, Michael Fabricant and Stephen Brier shine a bright light on these changes, calling them out without romanticizing public education. Every policy maker and leader in higher education needs to read this book from cover to cover before undertaking educational 'reforms,' and every student, staff member, and professor must consider its arguments as we seek to understand the uncertainty we confront today."—Sara Goldrick-Rab, University of Wisconsin–Madison, author of *Paying the Price: College Costs, Financial Aid, and the Betrayal of the American Dream*

"*Austerity Blues* is a very fine book, well written and well argued. The wide-ranging scope of the topics it covers and its historical perspective are brilliantly synthesized into a compelling narrative indictment of the social and political consequences of disinvestment in higher education. It is a major contribution to knowledge and will be a landmark publication in the debate over the future of public higher education in this country."—David Harvey, City University of New York, author of *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*

"Written by two of the most highly qualified figures in labor studies and higher education, this book highlights the devastating impact of austerity by close examination of the rise and fall of two large state systems, New York and California."—Marc Bousquet, Emory University, author of *How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation*

"By synthesizing the whole array of threats confronting public higher education as we once knew it, Fabricant and Brier make a powerful contribution to our understanding of how educational access for ordinary Americans has narrowed. The general erosion in the quality of life for working and middle-class Americans is accompanied by and partly shaped by an erosion in opportunities to learn and develop, often camouflaged behind austerity politics."—Charles Payne, University of Chicago, author of *So Much Reform, So Little Change: The Persistence of Failure in Urban Schools*

"*Austerity Blues* is a must read for anyone interested in the crisis of public higher education. Fabricant and Brier place the crisis within the overall context of the neoliberal agenda aimed at privatizing public goods, and conclude that the movement to save public higher education must be part of a broader movement for social and economic justice."—Rudy Fichtenbaum, President of the American Association of University Professors