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The Structure of Higher Learning in Fin-de-Siècle America: Bureaucracy, Statistical Accounting, and Sociocultural Change

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[Donald A. Nielsen](#), *College of Charleston*

Abstract

This article draws on the ideas of Thorstein Veblen to diagnose current trends in the higher learning in America. It focuses on the increasing rationalization, bureaucratization and emphasis on statistical accounting as well as the dominance of administrative elites within the middle levels of higher education. It traces the impact of these methods throughout a range of academic areas, including hiring and evaluation of faculty, the place of students, the content and conduct of intellectual programs, and the operation more generally of the academic organization.

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