

## MIT and the Rise of the Entrepreneurial University

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See <http://www.amazon.com/Entrepreneurial-Science-Routledge-Studies-Competition/dp/041528516X>

### **Abstract:**

MIT has played a distinctive role in U.S academia, creating formats for interaction with industry and then diffusing them to other schools. Although the idea of science as the basis of economic development is not new, policies encouraging the university to become a driver of the science-based economy are relatively new and sometimes controversial. Logically, however, much of that controversy should dissipate in the light of how the university's engagement in this key economic role is inherent in its first mission, teaching, and manifest in its second, research. Nevertheless, just as tension has persisted between teaching and research even as it has been found to be fruitful to locate them jointly in the same institution, so may we expect a continuing friction between the university's newest mission and its older ones.

The MIT model, combining basic research and teaching with industrial innovation, is displacing Harvard as the academic exemplar. Until quite recently, pursuing the 'endless frontier' of basic research was the primary ideological justification of elite US academic institutions.<sup>1</sup> Harvard University was the model, with numerous schools identifying themselves as the 'Harvard' of their respective regions. Such claims are seldom heard anymore. With an entrepreneurial mode increasingly followed at Harvard, and at academic institutions that model themselves upon it, the prediction that MIT would eventually conform to the traditional US research university mode has been disconfirmed.

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<sup>1</sup> Geiger, Roger. 1986. *To Advance Knowledge: The Growth of American Research Universities, 1900-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press

Instead, the reverse process has occurred as liberal arts research universities adopt a mission closer to the 'land grant' tradition of regional economic development, MIT's founding purpose and historic forte.

The thesis of this book is that a new academic model---the entrepreneurial university--- is created as universities combine teaching and research with the capitalization of knowledge. The university's assumption of an entrepreneurial role is the latest step in the evolution of a medieval institution from its original purpose of conservation of knowledge to the extension and capitalization of knowledge. As the university increasingly provides the basis for economic development through the generation of social and intellectual, as well as human capital, it becomes a core institution in society.

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