



A Creature of Our Own Making: Reflections on Contemporary Academic Life

Gary A. Olson

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Witty, savvy, incisive, and entertaining short essays on the culture, mores, and practices of higher education.

Drawing on more than three decades of experience as a scholar, teacher, and administrator, Gary A. Olson, a keen observer of higher education and a monthly columnist for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, explores the intricacies of life in academe. These meditations, which appeared as columns in the *Chronicle* over a six-year span, explore a rich tapestry of subjects from the craft of academic administration to how institutions are reforming their operations. Also included are topics germane to faculty and their work, such as how to network within your discipline, how to report faculty accomplishments accurately, how to navigate the tenure and promotion system, and how to create a culture of recognition and reward for faculty, staff, and students.

Many academics become preoccupied with the intricacies of their own disciplines and are not always cognizant of how other parts of their institutions work. Most go through their careers with an incomplete (and in some cases completely wrong) understanding of many aspects of academic life. Olson's essays shed light on the complex workings of our academic institutions and provide answers to important questions about the modern university: What are the limits of academic freedom? Exactly what is "shared governance?" Why are many universities reorganizing their academic units? What are successful ways to recruit first-rate faculty and staff? Witty, incisive, and entertaining, this book is for anyone interested in academic life and a must read for new professors and new administrators.

"...a reflective guide to assist individuals who are contemplating an administrative role ... current and future leaders may be well served to understand what to expect; how to prepare; when to act; who to know; why it's not about pay; and how to avoid common administrative challenges." — *Journal of Higher Education*

"A *Creature of Our Own Making* is a much recommended addition to educational studies collections." — *Midwest Book Review*

Gary A. Olson is Professor of English at Idaho State University. He is the editor and author of many books, including *The Future of Higher Education: Perspectives from America's Academic Leaders* (coedited with John W. Presley).

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