American higher education is at a crossroads. Cost-minded students and their families—and the public at large—are questioning the worth of a college education, even as study after study shows how important it is to economic and social mobility.

In this timely and focused primer, Goldie Blumenstyk guides readers through the forces and trends that have brought colleges to this point and highlights some of the ways American colleges will be re-shaped in the years to come.

Highlighting how open-ended the conversation about higher education’s future remains, it illuminates how big the stakes are for students, colleges, and the nation.

"Filled to the brim with useful facts and even-handed analyses, this book provides cogent answers for parents, students, lawmakers, and anyone else who has questions about our colleges and universities—why they cost so much, are they worth the price, how technology is changing the way they teach, who is responsible for their performance." -- Derek Bok, President Emeritus, Harvard University

"Goldie Blumenstyk brings knowledge and insight to the higher education debate. This book is even-handed and smart, and shapes some abstruse, political issues into a brisk, compelling read." -- John Katzman, former CEO of The Princeton Review & 2U; Founder and CEO of Noodle