

Book Reviews



Kolodny, Annette. *Failing the Future: A Dean Looks at Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century.* Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Pr., 1998. 298p. \$24.95, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8223-2186-6). LC 97-037781.

Annette Kolodny's credentials to offer a dean's perspective on higher education are impeccable. She is a recent dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona; the book cover describes her prior experiences as "a distinguished teacher, a prize-winning scholar of American literature, a feminist thinker." *Failing the Future: A Dean Looks at Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century* fits neither its title nor its stated purposes. Rather, the book describes some experiences of one dean, few of which would be generalizable. The way these experiences were written led me to conclude they were more a catharsis for the author than a prescription for the next century.

In fact, the book's major failing is a clash among many intentions. Readers should be warned that this book will not help them learn how to be a dean or even to know whether—or how—to criticize current administrators; in short, readers should not expect to read a book about "deaning." In the final chapter, Kolodny seems to discover that her purpose in the book has been to alter the conversations about education by changing the questions. She does this by sharing a collection of her opinions on education from kindergarten through graduate school. The topics covered do not organize into a systematic whole, which lessens the value of anything that could be called a premise or a major argument.

Confusion over the book's purpose continues into the writing style. Is it a collection of speeches? Is it written for alumni and Rotary Club lunches? Finally, either the editor or the author needed to eliminate duplicative references to expe-

riences. There are no graphics; the index is adequate. Many of the items in the nine-page bibliography are from the 1990s, but the use of popular sources diminishes the seriousness of the answers. The author may have reason to be pleased with the college's promotion and tenure document and the "Summary Checklist of Selected Family-Friendly Initiatives and Programs" developed under her leadership, but they add little to her look at higher education in the twenty-first century.

Recommended only for comprehensive higher education collections or collections at the University of Arizona.—*Martha Hale, Emporia State University.*

Levine, Arthur, and Jeanette S. Cureton.

When Hope and Fear Collide: A Portrait of Today's College Student. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998. 188p. \$29.95, alk. paper (ISBN 0-7879-3877-7). LC 97-042414.

Academic librarians who have been left puzzled by encounters with the current generation of college students may well find their experiences described in this study of the 1990s collegiate culture based on surveys conducted between 1992 and 1997 of 270 chief student affairs officers and 9,100 undergraduates, and supplemented with on-site interviews of staff and students. Arthur Levine, president and professor of education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and former executive editor of *Change* magazine, has been extensively involved in higher education research. Indeed, in many ways, *When Hope and Fear Collide* is an extension of his 1980 book *When Dreams and Heroes Died*. Joined by fellow academic and researcher, Jeanette Cureton, Levine offers a concise overview of the concerns and needs of college students.