

PREFACE

THIS IS HOW YOU KILL A PROFESSION

How did we discard the idea of college faculty? That is, how did we decide to systematically eliminate an entire class of professionals whom we once entrusted to conduct the final distillation of our children into capable, confident adults? How did we come to decide that college teachers didn't deserve job security, didn't deserve health insurance, didn't deserve to make more than convenience store clerks?

It wasn't hard, really.

We discarded college faculty in the same way that we discarded medical general practitioners: through providing insane rewards to specialists and leaving most care in the hands of paraprofessionals.

We discarded college faculty in the same way that we discarded cab drivers: by leveling the profession and allowing anyone to participate, as long as they had a minimum credential and didn't need much money.

We discarded college faculty in the same way that we discarded magazine and newspaper writers: by relabeling the work "content" and its workers "content providers."

We discarded college faculty in the same way that we discarded local auto mechanics: by making all of the systems and regulations so sophisticated that they now require an army of technicians and specialized equipment.

We discarded college faculty in the same way that we discarded

bookkeepers: by finally letting women do it after decades of declaring that impossible, and then immediately reducing the status of the work once it became evident that women could, in fact, do it well.

Our contemporary religion of innovation has as one of its tenets the following belief: *Rather than defeat your competition, make your competitors irrelevant.* This is exactly what we see in higher education. College faculty were not defeated after great struggle, after a battle with a winner and a loser. College has simply become redefined, over and over, in ways that make faculty irrelevant. College teaching, as a profession, is being eliminated one small, undetected, definitional drop at a time.