Advance Praise for
Madmen, Intellectuals, and Academic Scribblers:
The Economic Engine of Political Change

“Ideas matter. Madmen, with its engaging stories, is perfect for anyone interested in public policy, or how our world could be a better place.”
—Tyler Cowen, George Mason University, blogger at The Marginal Revolution, and author of Discover Your Inner Economist

“There’s no shortage of writing about bad government policies, but Leighton and López go several steps deeper, by exploring the incentives that foster bad policies, the institutions that foster bad incentives, the ideas that foster bad institutions, and the social processes that foster the spread of bad ideas. Better yet, they offer wise prescriptions for change and colorful stories to illustrate their wisdom. This is a book that manages all at once to be sage, important, and great fun to read. I highly recommend it.”
—Steven E. Landsburg, Professor of Economics, University of Rochester and author of The Armchair Economist

“This book is an inspiring reminder that great thinking matters. It’s a delightful, accessible, and thought-provoking book for anyone interested in big ideas at the intersection of economics and politics.”
—Charles Wheelan, University of Chicago and author of Naked Economics: Undressing the Dismal Science

“Leighton and López have written a captivating book that explains the process of social change, from ideas to outcomes. Their theoretical framework—centered on the figure of the ‘political entrepreneur’—is illuminating and original. It will spark productive conversations among those who are interested in social change and the wealth of nations.”
—Giancarlo Ibarguen, Entrepreneur and President of Universidad Francisco Marroquín
“Come along with Leighton and López as they speed date significant economic and philosophical influencers and chart the triumph of markets. As an erstwhile political practitioner in radical market reforming mode, I was relieved to find that I could dodge the moniker of ‘madman’ and classify myself as a ‘political entrepreneur.’ Racy and relevant, this book is a call to reforming arms.”

—Honourable Ruth Richardson, former Minister of Finance, New Zealand

“Madmen makes clear there are several necessary conditions for a political shift to take place. We tend to think of change as resulting from a single hero or villain, but the story is more complex. The tales in this book show what it takes to effect change, while weaving a yarn that is entertaining and memorable.”

—Michael C. Munger, Duke University and author of Analyzing Policy

“Leighton and Lopéz supply intellectually sound arguments, grounded in public choice and of Austrian economics, to explain why democratic governments often fail to produce policies that are consistent with the public’s interest. Most impressive are the authors’ evident grasp of—and ability to synthesize—complex arguments about the properties of ‘good government.’”

—William F. Shughart II, University of Mississippi and co-author of Policy Challenges and Political Responses
Madmen, Intellectuals, and Academic Scribblers
For our families, especially our wives, for their love, guidance, and patience.
Political change happens when entrepreneurs exploit loose spots in the structure of ideas, institutions, and incentives.