Wasting the University with Metrics

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This paper argues that an obsession with quantitative metrics is damaging universities, and it employs the concept of waste to make the case. It argues that contemporary political discourse frames publically funded universities first, as an unaccountable 'waste' of taxpayer funds, and second as a 'wasted' commons that could provide greater economic benefits if properly ordered by competitive metrics. Finally, it explains how rather than making universities more efficient, competitive metrics are ‘wasting’ the beneficial excessiveness of teaching and research.

Chris is an urban and economic geographer and political economist. His research focuses on the spatial dynamics of markets and commodities, in both the past and present. With colleagues, he is currently writing a book on the growth of quantitative metrics in higher education.

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