

## Embedded in most universities is a profoundly anti-intellectual culture

Published: January 13, 2026, 4:18 pm

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The [Guardian Long Read](#) is well worth your attention today. It is entitled:

*Why we should bulldoze the business school*

And is subtitled:

*There are 13,000 business schools on Earth. That's 13,000 too many. And I should know — I've taught in them for 20 years. By [Martin Parker](#)*

I have a lot of sympathy with what is said. To summarise Parker's argument I choose this paragraph:

*The sorts of doors to knowledge we find in universities are based on exclusions. However, the B-school is an even more extreme case. It is constituted through separating commercial life from the rest of life, but then undergoes a further specialisation. The business school assumes capitalism, corporations and managers as the default form of organisation, and everything else as history, anomaly, exception, alternative. In terms of curriculum and research, everything else is peripheral.*

The consequences of this are what the article explores. As Parker points out they are wide-ranging. Apart from straightforward narrowmindedness, which is the opposite of what university education should supply, the impact is apparent in attitudes towards trade unions, employees who are presumed to be automatons, marketing as want generation, and so on. All of this is unquestioning. As Parker puts it:

*Within the business school, capitalism is assumed to be the end of history, an economic model that has trumped all the others, and is now taught as science, rather than ideology.*

In other words, even if (and it's a big if) economics was transformed there is a bigger problem and that is the existence of 13,000 university departments teaching that greed is good based on lowest common denominator economic thinking for very high fees that those paying them think entitles them to reward by exploitation because that is what they have been taught is the essence of modern management.

Of course this is a caricature. There will be exceptions. But I fear Parker is too often

right. And that is deeply worrying. What he is, in effect, saying is that embedded in most universities is a profoundly anti-intellectual department dedicated to maintaining the exploitative status quo in society. I admire his courage for saying so.