



# Lessons Learned: Reflections of a University President

*William G. Bowen*

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*Lessons Learned* gives unprecedented access to the university president's office, providing a unique set of reflections on the challenges involved in leading both research universities and liberal arts colleges. In this landmark book, William Bowen, former president of Princeton University and of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and coauthor of the acclaimed best-seller *The Shape of the River*, takes readers behind closed faculty-room doors to discuss how today's colleges and universities serve their age-old missions.

With extraordinary candor, clarity, and good humor, Bowen shares the sometimes-hard lessons he learned about working with trustees, faculty, and campus groups; building an effective administrative team; deciding when to speak out on big issues and when to insist on institutional restraint; managing dissent; cultivating alumni and raising funds; setting academic priorities; fostering inclusiveness; eventually deciding when and how to leave the president's office; and much more. Drawing on more than four decades of experience, Bowen demonstrates how his greatest lessons often arose from the missteps he made along the way, and how, when it comes to university governance, there are important general principles but often no single right answer.

Full of compelling stories, insights, and practical wisdom, *Lessons Learned* frames the questions that leaders of higher education will continue to confront at a complex moment in history.

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