

2015

Review of How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World by Nicholas Maxwell

William Simkulet

Cleveland State University, w.simkulet@csuohio.edu

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Repository Citation

Simkulet, William, "Review of How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World by Nicholas Maxwell"
(2015). *Philosophy and Religious Studies Department Faculty Publications*. 31.
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PHILOSOPHY

Maxwell, Nicholas. **How Universities Can Help Create a Wiser World: The Urgent Need for an Academic Revolution.**

Philosopher Maxwell (Emeritus Reader and Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Univ. Coll. London) contends that the world faces many challenges—war, massive economic inequality, climate change—and argues that before solving these problems we must first learn how. Exacerbating the issue, the author continues, is that we cannot develop this understanding from contemporary universities unless they move away from the pursuit of knowledge and toward a seeking of know-how, or practical ability. Maxwell's premise is foundationally marred as we know how to solve most of the challenges facing us—e.g., people are well aware that to stop climate change we need to eliminate pollution. We are in a prisoner's dilemma, however, according to Maxwell: while we can curtail the rising temperature of the planet, self-interest means that we will continue because it is unrealistic to think everyone will change their behavior. Further, prisoner's dilemmas are best solved with external constraints that make self-destructive actions immediately self-defeating rather than a transformation in education. **VERDICT** As this work is fundamentally flawed in its argument it is not a worthwhile purchase for libraries.—William Simkulet, Andover, KS