

Postdoc Academic Chat #7

THE THRIVING PROFESSOR: FINDING BALANCE IN YOUR PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIFE

Friday, July 9, 2010

- 1. Integrating Work and Life: A Vision for a Changing Academy**
- 2. Reimagining Faculty Work**
- 3. Unfinished Feminist Revolution Must Balance Work and Family**

1. Integrating Work and Life: A Vision for a Changing Academy

In this month's Carnegie Perspectives looks at future directions for faculty development . It is by Pat Hutchings, Mary Taylor Huber, and Chris M. Golde and is #28 in the monthly series called Carnegie Foundation Perspectives. These short commentaries exploring various educational issues are produced by the CFAT. The Foundation invites your response at: CarnegiePresident@carnegiefoundation.org. Reprinted with permission.

Imagine that you could gaze into a crystal ball and see 25 years into the future. What will the life of an effective and productive faculty member in your favorite academic department be like? How will he or she achieve a productive balance among the various elements of faculty work and life? The crystal ball seems awfully cloudy to us; the one thing that seems certain is that the life of a faculty member joining a department tomorrow will be quite different from the life lived by a faculty member retiring today.

These questions are pressing because the academic profession is nearing a moment of great change. The large cohort of faculty hired during the late 1960s and early 1970s will retire during the next decade, and a new generation is coming in. We urgently need policies and practices that affirm and ensure the dignity, humanity and intellectual excitement of academic careers for higher education to

remain vital. Higher education's future depends on the creativity with which it can provide for the professional growth of all faculty and for flexibility in the shape and timing of their careers.

The challenges are urgent on two fronts.

Academic work will require a new and larger set of abilities and skills. Teaching a more diverse population of students requires deeper knowledge of pedagogy than before, and advising now extends into new domains like service learning and undergraduate research. In most fields, scholarly work is becoming increasingly collaborative, interdisciplinary and practically relevant, at the same time that expectations for productivity are on the rise. Public service involves greater reciprocity between academic and community partners, while academic decision-making in today's complex educational, financial and legal environment takes more time and thought. And for many, the trio of teaching, research and service may be joined by business and economic enterprises. Integrating these work domains will be a particular challenge.

"Work - life balance" is the catchall phrase that encompasses a variety of needs for flexibility in the timing and pacing of faculty careers. The ever-increasing demands and pace of academic life are stretching many faculty members to the breaking point, placing further pressures on the boundaries between personal and professional domains. Workplace policies developed in the past no longer fit current realities. Women and men alike are trying to find new ways to handle family responsibilities for children and aging parents. Few policies address the needs of the growing proportion of part-time and non-tenure-track faculty members, nor of the growing ranks of retiring faculty members who are still vigorous and able to make meaningful contributions.

Surprisingly, these two conversations about the work and life of faculty are rarely connected. The first set of issues focuses on changing faculty roles and rewards in keeping with an expanded conception of scholarly work. The second set of issues focuses on the balance between faculty work and life at all of the stages of faculty careers.

In March of 2006, the Carnegie Foundation in partnership with the Sloan Foundation convened a group of distinguished participants active in each of these conversations, who created a vision of professional

development to meet the challenges for the new academy (see the online Professional Development for a Changing Academy Report).

Six principles emerged from the discussions:

1. Begin professional development in college and intensify in graduate school.
2. Provide flexibility for work-and-life issues throughout the academic career.
3. Recognize, develop and reward multiple talents and contributions.
4. Foster long-term planning and preparation.
5. Cultivate leadership throughout faculty careers.
6. Strengthen networks that encourage learning.

These principles rest on an expansive view of professional development. On the one hand, policies and practices (family leave, retirement policies, tenure clock flexibility) must allow a diverse professoriate to maximize effectiveness. On the other hand, opportunities for learning throughout the career (engagement with the scholarship of teaching, interdisciplinary networks, civic engagement opportunities) should be widely available.

Traditional notions of professional development are broadened in three directions: when, who and how. Professional development should not be reserved for assistant professors or for those who are somehow deemed ineffective; instead, it starts in graduate school and meets the needs of faculty members throughout their careers, including through retirement. Professional development should reach all faculty members, especially those with temporary appointments who often feel excluded from the college community. We must also recognize the important roles played by many academic staff members. Flexibility, a broadened view of what the work entails and how the work is done, should also undergird professional development efforts.

These principles are just the beginning of the conversation. We invite readers to dream with us. How can faculty life in the future balance and integrate various work roles and the personal and professional? In light of that answer, what professional development practices and policies will help ensure that that vision becomes reality?

2. Reimagining Faculty Work

Below is my edited version of a summary prepared by James Yao of Texas A&M University, of an article by J. P. Bean, "Alternative Models of Professional Roles: New Languages to Reimagine Faculty Work," *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 69, No. 5, September/October 1998, pp. 496-512.

While you probably won't agree with all the comments, they do give us something to consider as we rethink faculty work roles in the coming decade.

Regards,

Rick Reis

Quantity over Quality

"... the language currently used at research universities to describe faculty work is constraining regardless of its source. It emphasizes quantity as opposed to quality, extrinsic as opposed to intrinsic characteristics of work, a lack of trust of faculty members, and an emphasis on the procurement of resources."

Research Hegemony

"Once, the undergraduate curriculum held the faculty together: we taught and students learned, and that was our main engagement. After the success of the Manhattan Project and other uses of science in World War II, the research hegemony arose. Undergraduates, once the chief focus of faculty attention, became fodder for the graduate research enterprise; universities became not just big business, but big businesses."

The Language of Higher Education

" How do we talk about higher education now? This the language I hear: efficiency, productivity, technology, credit hours generated, grants with overhead received, accountability, assessment, competition, costs, total quality management. This is not the language of education or morality or scholarship or learning or community; it is the language of counting, accountants, accountability and, to a greater or lesser extent, it is how we imagine our enterprise. ... There is pressure to increase the size of classes, whether learning is improved for students or not, and pressure to increase the scale of funded research, whether the research is driven by need for knowledge or not. ... There are pressures to forego research that might take several years to complete in favor of scholarship that becomes trivial as faculty search for the smallest publishable unit on the shortest possible timeline."

Extrinsic vs Intrinsic Rewards

" ... We are role models for students not only as professionals but also as

human beings. It is unlikely that any new definition of faculty work can ignore students. ... One should work for the development of one's discipline, or one's self, or of knowledge and expression. ..

"When our extrinsic rewards are high, we have won the game of evaluation, but we may or may not have served ourselves, our disciplines, or our students. The primary extrinsic rewards for faculty are salary and promotion. ... To endorse materialism, to teach our students this value through our example, to export this value through international students around the world, raises the specter of sustainability. ..."

Rampant Workaholism

"Perhaps the greatest danger to faculty members is that the definition of their roles will endorse workaholism as a virtue. ... First and foremost workaholism is a pathology, not a virtue, even if it is rewarded and even if it is a norm. A person addicted to the process of work is out of control.

"Addiction relies on processes such as the promise, which takes a person out of the present time into the future. ... Another process is external referencing, in which one's sense of self is developed outside oneself. Faculty members often depend on external references, like the editors of refereed journals, to assess their worth as scholars. A third process is invalidation. Here the addict defines into nonexistence ideas that she or he doesn't like or can't control. ... Hard work is to be admired; workaholism is not. .

"Three desirable things to consider in a new definition of faculty roles are to be true to ourselves, to value students, and work for intrinsic reasons. Simultaneously, we should avoid externally defined roles, the primacy of extrinsic rewards, and workaholism. ... It is time to move beyond the language of counting and accountability and consider describing faculty work in new languages. ..."

Reimagining Our Work

"Utopian societies fail, but utopian ideals can be guides, reminders of our potential. It is not realistic in this society to ignore what accountants say, else your account becomes empty. ... When one's work is more influenced by the potential to increase income than by disciplinary needs, something is amiss. ... There is little doubt in my mind that if such a university existed, the best faculty and the best students would flock to it. As a result, it would become one of the wealthiest and most productive

institutions.

"It is time that we take responsibility for our own work, define our role broadly, and contribute to the society that supports us. Although we are not likely to escape public scrutiny, only if we are accountable to ourselves can we be accountable to the public. Only if we reimagine our work, can we serve the soul of the world."

3. Unfinished Feminist Revolution Must Balance Work and Family

The article below argues that the unfinished feminist revolution must now seek to balance work and family issues. It is taken from the April 10, 2002 issue of the Stanford Report by Lis Trei.

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/news/report/>. Reprinted with permission.

A FEMINIST ECONOMIC VIEW OF WORK AND FAMILY

BY LISA TREI

The feminist revolution has made it possible for women to compete in the workforce, education Professor Myra Strober says, but it has failed to make child care part of the equation.

"We have made a revolution, but we haven't thought about how the kids will be cared for," Strober told a mostly female audience attending a lecture April 3 titled, "A Feminist Economic View of Work and Family." The Institute for Research on Women and Gender (IRWG) sponsored the talk as part of the 2002 Jing Lyman Lecture Series.

"The revolution is unfinished," Strober said. "Combining work and family remains challenging for everyone I know." The next essential step of the feminist revolution must be to make high-quality, regulated, affordable child care available to everyone, she said. "We need to make it possible for women -- and men -- to combine career and family."

Strober, a labor economist, outlined some of the sweeping achievements of the feminist movement that began in the 1960s:

* In 1965, only 20 percent of married women with a child under 3 years worked. Today, two-thirds of married women with a child under 2 years

work, and 60 percent of married women with a child under 1 year work.

* In 1965, a full-time female worker earned 60 percent of a male worker's salary. Today, that figure has jumped to more than 70 percent.

* In 1970, no women headed four-year coeducational colleges and universities. Today, women lead 16 percent of such institutions.

While some of the socioeconomic forces that helped bring about changes were under way before the feminist movement started -- for example, female participation in the workforce was already growing -- Strober argued that the impact of individual people cannot be discounted.

"To say this would have happened anyway is simply historically incorrect," she said. "The kinds of changes that happened took place because of human effort, mostly by women but also by some men."

Strober warned against falling into a trap of thinking that progress is linear and inevitable: "We cannot sit back and just say it will all keep changing, and now we can turn our attention to something else."

For example, in 1984, women earned 37 percent of undergraduate degrees in computer science. Today, that figure is less than 20 percent, she said. Furthermore, 37 percent of President Bill Clinton's nominees were female. That figure has dropped to 25 percent under President George W. Bush.

According to Strober, it has not been enough for women simply to move into traditionally male jobs. "Women are not necessarily a force for progressive change," she said. "We didn't know that in the 1960s." At the time, she said, feminists thought that women who moved into senior management positions would change the working environment around them. That did not happen across the board, but today it is considered the norm for women to work.

"The question is, now that women are in the workforce, who is caring for children and older people?" Strober asked. Answering her question, she said that one-third of children under 5 years old with working mothers are in child care centers; 15 percent are in family day care; and 5 percent are cared for by nannies. That leaves about 48 percent of children cared for by a relative, she said, including a parent. Parents pay from \$5,000 to \$10,000 a year per child for high-quality

care, she said. (Child care costs at Stanford are substantially higher -- full-time infant care runs about \$1,450 a month.)

Citing research by Barbara Bergman, economics professor emerita at the University of Maryland, Strober said the United States spends \$20 billion a year on child care. Of that, \$2.2 billion goes to tax rebates for middle-class families, and the balance supports poor children. To develop a high-quality, affordable child care system nationwide, Bergman argues that the country must spend another \$26 billion annually. The figure does not include increasing salaries for people working in child care, a chronically low-paid industry. But it is unlikely that socioeconomic conditions alone will bring about such changes, Strober said. "Today, the government is talking about giving money back to people," she said.

People directly affected by the struggle to balance work and family must use the feminist movement to make the current career system more flexible, Strober argued. They should work with the movement's past leaders to understand how best to succeed in the future, she said. "If there is going to be a resurgence in the value of 'caring labor' -- and more of it -- we are the ones who need to do it," Strober said. "If we're going to finish this revolution we started ... young people have to join us." SR
