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A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION: THE "NEXT MODEL" TAKES SHAPE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The realities of higher education and its academic staffing are being transformed by economic, political and socio-cultural forces. Individual institutions now compete in a global market for students, faculty and financial resources. Colleges and universities have experienced pervasive disruption in their habits, adjustments in their modus operandi and a collective extension of their traditional boundaries. The U.S. model of postsecondary education appears to be reaching its upper limits of scalability. A prime consequence is a new understanding of the role of higher education faculty.

At the heart of the U.S. model has been the full-time, tenured professor charged with teaching, research and service. Beyond specifying the nature of the work role, the model has come to specify the career trajectory of faculty; most universities have precisely structured the hiring and promotion processes leading to tenure. But many institutions have broken down this model by hiring substantial segments of their academic staff into part-time and/or non-tenure track roles. Such developments strike at the model of "integrated" academic roles and the model of "institutionally-based" academic careers. This restructuring of academic roles and careers has proceeded within the context of a larger reorganization of work in the global knowledge-based economy. That restructuring has coincided with the cresting of broader demographic shifts within the faculty. The result has been a grafting of new demographic groups onto an academic workforce that is rapidly differentiating by function.

A final factor contributing to the contemporary higher education mix is the increased prominence of the professional fields and the emergence of the non-research university sector as the center of gravity of U.S. colleges and universities. This has meant the introduction of large numbers of faculty who come to academic work without the traditional socialization in doctoral programs and not infrequently from post-professional training work-roles outside academe.

INTRODUCTION

A new era is upon us as basic realities of higher education and its academic staffing change at a dizzying pace with profound implications. We argue herein that *merely* tinkering at the edges with ongoing conceptions of the U.S. model of higher education and the role of academic workers – however well-established and widely emulated globally – is going, going, gone. Earlier conceptions of "the system" are being transformed relentlessly by economic, political and socio-cultural forces that make the former conceptions increasingly obsolete. The confluence of these strengthening forces have as a prime consequence a bold new understanding of higher education's most central resource—the academic professionals who comprise the faculty. Put in other words, former conceptions no longer suffice. They fail to capture the scope and pace of escalating changes and their inescapable, far reaching implications. The previously prevailing model, and variations of it, featured generally familiar characteristics while, nonetheless, evolving steadily. But now that model is being starkly transposed.

When published five years ago, *The American Faculty* hinted at the scope and magnitude of such developments. Current work seeks to gather emerging evidence and assess its significance from a clearer vantage point. This new work in progress has two interrelated objectives. The first is to refresh what is known about the faculty, based on a wider and more current array of data sources viewed through a series of lenses focused on demographics, job satisfaction, career patterns and so on. Second, the current endeavor will interpret what this updating signifies for the academic profession and for the larger American post-secondary system. These grander systemic changes will draw importantly on contemporary global perspectives as other national systems evolve rapidly and more interactively with the U.S.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SMALLER AND FLATTER

To say that the world has changed dramatically in the past twenty years may be the ultimate understatement. Harken back to the early 1990's and consider the landscape of everyday life—no Internet, no PC, very few cell phones (and the ones we had could be used only for talking). The Cold War had just ended and the U.S. had emerged as the solitary, unchallenged superpower. China and India were still emerging economies seeking to compete with Japan and, ultimately, the U.S. A mere 20 years later, we are totally "wired" with digital access to almost anything anytime. Young people come to college oriented more toward digital than text literacy, with shorter attention spans, expectations of immediate access and gratification, and with different sources of knowledge and approaches to investigating the world. Teaching almost certainly involves a digital component or platform, is less time- and place- bound and generally more public, i.e. less cloaked by the traditional privacy of the classroom walls. Scholarship has changed as well with digital access to almost any piece of knowledge in moments and instant collaboration with colleagues both synchronously and asynchronously through SKYPE. The position of the U.S. in the world has been considerably recalibrated—China and India are now closer competitors, both economically and geopolitically, in an emerging multi-polar world order; indeed, China has become our "friendly neighborhood banker." Our world has collectively "shrunk" and "flattened" as we have been told time and again.

Perhaps the highest trump card that the U.S. holds in navigating the intensifying cross-currents of this technological and global economic tide is our system of higher education which is the envy of the world and perhaps our most sought after export. But just as individuals' habits have been disrupted, ultimately reorienting personal modus operandi in the world and extending individual boundaries, so too have postsecondary institutions at the forefront of scientific knowledge and progress experienced pervasive disruption in their habits, some occasionally awkward adjustments to their ways of "doing business," and, more transparently, a collective extension of their traditional boundaries. The knowledge industry in which postsecondary education operates has gone global and individual institutions are competing in a vastly expanded arena for students, faculty and financial resources. Moreover, as virtually all nations seek to prepare ever larger portions of their populaces for the knowledge-based economy via postsecondary training, the models of postsecondary education that the U.S. successfully designed and implemented over the past half century for instruction and research appear to be reaching their upper limits of scalability. The traditional classroom-based model of instruction that relied on highly credentialed faculty (professionals who commonly engage concurrently in both instruction and research) and featured

face-to-face faculty interaction with a limited group of resident, full-time students, is not an affordable option for delivering postsecondary education to 70 percent or more of the traditional college-age population. This is especially true in light of rapidly expanding competing commitments to an increasingly aging population and the consequent costs of healthcare and eldercare.

The need to rebalance the societal imperative to invest in the primary institutions charged with knowledge and human resource development and the concomitant imperative to redirect ever more limited public resources to primary and secondary education, healthcare, corrections, etc., has emerged as the messy societal calculus of our age—one that is shaped as much by maneuvering for political advantage as by reasoned considerations of the "good of the order." So, institutions of higher learning are being pressured to do more (because we must to maintain our competiveness) with less (because there are so many competing and politically powerful priorities beyond postsecondary education). This is hardly an original observation. But these broad and deep accommodations to new realities have necessitated some "tinkering" and even wholesale restructuring of the U.S. model of higher education over the past 20 years.

THE TRADITIONALLY INTEGRATED FACULTY WORK-ROLE

At the heart of the American model, especially from a financial perspective, has been the full-time, tenured professor charged with undertaking a distinctive combination of responsibilities for teaching, research and service (both internal to the campus and external to the academic profession and the larger community). Organizationally, this has meant that the discharge of major responsibilities on campus is not distributed over several classes of faculty specialists in some form of rational division of labor, with their efforts then coordinated efficiently by university leadership. Those efforts are not divided, but rather integrated into a blended work-role with the various components largely coordinated *intra*-personally. This model of postsecondary faculty as "multipurpose" professionals decide on their own what mix of the three functions best contribute to the general good of the institution, and thereby, in a sense, the larger society. Moreover, the teaching component of the faculty role integrates several activities that in other contexts might well be undertaken by "other" workers. For example, the traditional model assumes that one faculty member is responsible for a single credit-bearing course and thus prepares the course material and syllabus, delivers that material in a face-to-face classroom setting, interacts with students outside of the classroom setting to answer questions and provide assistance, and assesses student academic work and certifies student achievement.[1] That integrated role is depicted in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1
THE INTEGRATED FACULTY ROLE IN THE U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION MODEL

TEACHING	RESEARCH	SERVICE

• Course preparation
• Course delivery
• Student interaction
• Assessment
• Tutorial
• Clinical supervision
• Thesis guidance
	• Proposal preparation
	• Infrastructure maintenance
	• Research execution
	• Staff supervision
	• Budget Administration
	• Report preparation and publication
		• Internal
		  ○ Department
		  ○ Institution
		• External
		  ○ Local Community
		  ○ Professional associations

1 In the health sciences, and perhaps the arts, there have traditionally been somewhat different divisions of labor, but those variations have never been modal. Moreover, the research university has historically employed teaching assistants to share with focal professors some components of the teaching role.

Figure 1 illustrates that beyond the full complement of activities related to offering courses, the prototypical faculty also engages in non-course-related teaching activities encompassing the supervision of student research and possibly overseeing student clinical experience, often in the form of internships. The research role is also multi-dimensional, including not only the execution of research and preparation of resulting reports and publications, but also the preparation of proposals for research support, the design and maintenance of research facilities, the hiring and training of research and graduate assistants (and perhaps post-docs), and the management of research-related budgets.[2] Beyond teaching and research, the service component of the faculty role can extend to multiple activities undertaken at multiple levels, ranging from a faculty member's own academic unit to the larger university to the broader community (local or professional) and perhaps beyond. Departmental service might involve serving in program director roles, assuming certain administrative responsibilities for student recruitment and advisement, course scheduling, and so on. Institutional service might involve participation in various governance structures including a faculty senate or other committees, and serving as liaison to various student organizations. Off-campus service activities range from consultation with community-based organizations to roles in learned societies and other disciplinary organizations to government advisory committee work.

Beyond specifying the nature of the work role, the American model has come to specify the career track or trajectory of faculty. Since at least World War II, most American universities have precisely structured the hiring and promotion processes for academic staff—full-time, entry level positions have been offered to requisitely credentialed individuals for a six-to-seven year probationary period, after which time they are either retained on permanent, tenured appointments or let go. Having achieved tenure, faculty may continue to pursue scholarship and promotion to a *full* professorship, or they may take on increasing administrative responsibility within their academic unit or at the campus level.

In the aggregate across all fields, about half of doctoral recipients pursue entry level assistant professorships. About half of those in research universities attain tenure and an associate professorship; this figure is closer to three-quarters in the non-research university sector. Two-thirds to three-quarters of those tenured advance into full professorships within the ensuing decade.[3] The underlying notion is that there is a *system* "benefit to science" for faculty pursuing knowledge through research and communicating it via teaching to be relatively insulated from political or other irrelevant pressures. There is further an individual benefit to tenure in terms of job security that in light of historically modest compensation ensures the capacity to recruit and retain able scholars. Finally, there is an institutional benefit to this arrangement from maintaining a community of scholars that provides for the effective conduct of research and education of students.

EVOLVING THE FACULTY MODEL

Much of the story of institutional adjustment to the new order is that of "tinkering" with one or more aspect of the model described here. That is hardly surprising insofar as the salaries of faculty (and other teaching staff) constitute approximately three-fourths of instructional budgets of most colleges and universities. Doing much more with less can hardly be managed without attending to the efficiencies and effectiveness of the basic model. Principal among those adjustments has been the unbundling of the work role through greater specialization of function. Many kinds of institutions have broken down the "holy trinity" of teaching, research and service by hiring substantial segments of their academic staff into "teaching-only" roles that require less highly credentialed staff, especially for the bulk of lower division undergraduate education. Teaching-only staff do not require the infrastructure necessary for research and development, and they can be hired on a part-time basis. The hiring of such "contingent" faculty enables considerable financial savings. A related adjustment involves the recruitment of full-time academic staff that do not have prospects for permanent employment, often referred to as non-tenure track faculty. Like those hired on a part-time basis, most "off-track" full-timers fill more specialized roles, typically teaching-only, but sometimes research-only or administration-only (e.g., program directors). Figure 2 depicts these more specialized faculty appointments in terms of the various functions and activities identified in Figure 1.

2 The multiplicity of components is typical of faculty in research universities. Faculty in other types of institutions would typically be less -focused on research-related activities.

3 Many of the remainder pursue positions in administration.

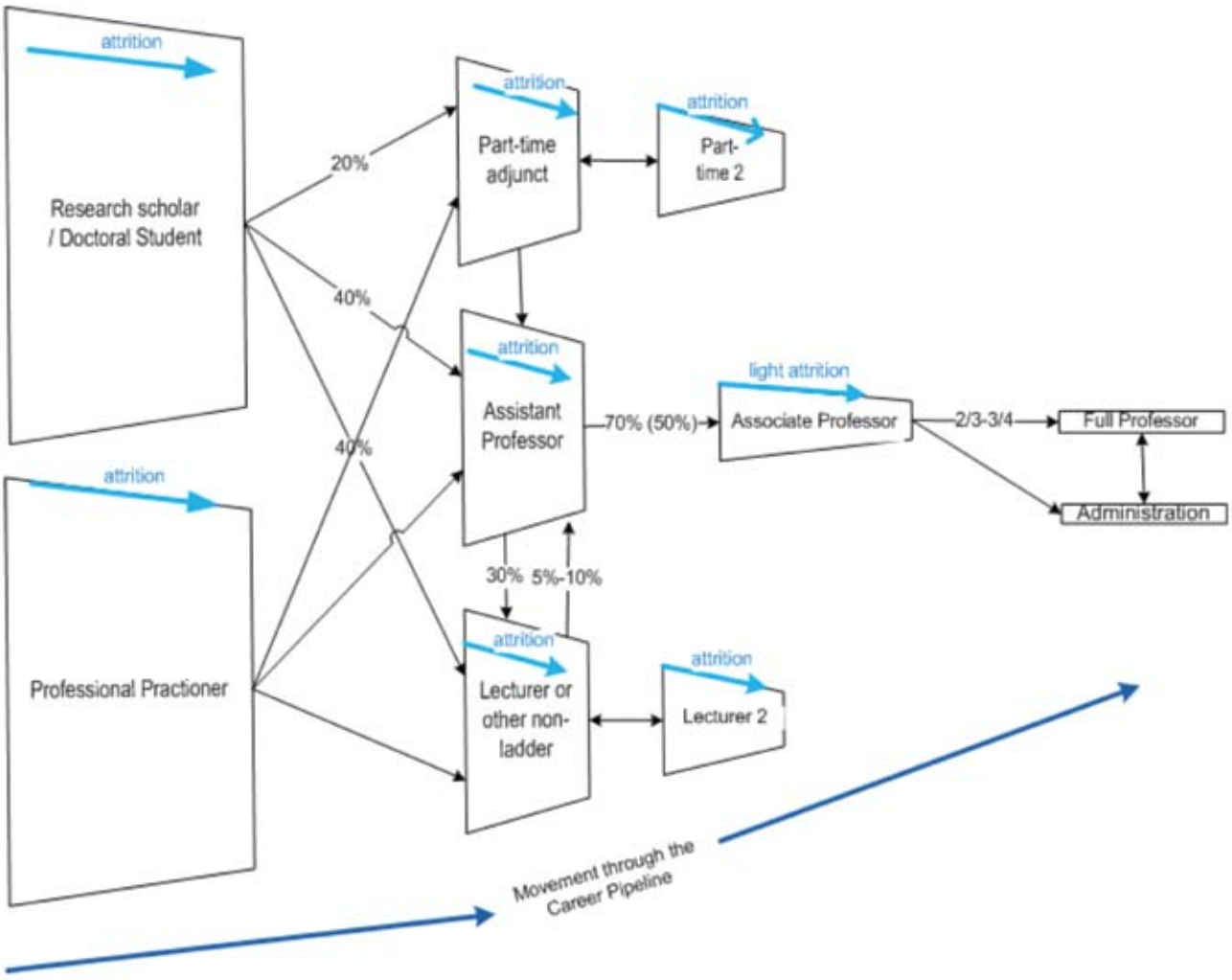
FIGURE 2
EMERGING RE-CONFIGURATIONS OF FACULTY FUNCTIONS IN THE U.S. HIGHER EDUCATION MODEL

PART-TIME ADJUNCT	FULL-TIME, LIMITED CONTRACT		
Teaching	**Teach - Only**	**Research - Only**	**Service - Only**
• Course delivery • Student interaction • Partial assessment	• Course preparation • Course delivery • Student interaction • Assessment • Academic advisement • Tutorial • Clinical supervision	• Research execution • Presentation • Report preparation and publication	• Program director • Limited teaching

Figure 2 suggests how, for example, part-time faculty typically perform only a few functions of the comprehensive teaching role—course delivery and interaction with students. They frequently work from departmentally-designed syllabi and base their student evaluations on examinations that are departmentally developed. They do not generally engage in non-course related teaching functions of the prototypical professor, such as student advisement and tutorial. Similarly, full-time, non-tenure eligible appointees, whether in teaching-, research- or service-only positions, perform only a portion of the activities of the prototypical professor in that given functional area.

These developments strike not only at the heart of the uniquely American model of "integrated" or blended academic roles, but also at the U.S. model of "institutionally-based" academic careers. Figure 3 depicts the evolving diversification of academic career tracks. In the middle of the figure is the traditional, highly structured track wherein new doctoral recipients move directly into entry-level, full-time, tenure-eligible assistant professorships. What is new is first the supplemental source of supply—practicing professionals now constitute a recruitment pool beyond new doctoral recipients. Moreover, the figure depicts two "new" alternative and parallel career tracks—a career track wherein those on part-time appointments move through a succession of such appointments and a track for those who make a career of moving among specialized, full-time appointments, but off the tenure track. The majority of the incumbents of these two parallel tracks are pursuing academic careers within their chosen field, but at multiple institutions (perhaps, more often than not, concurrently).

FIGURE 3
THE PARALLEL CAREER TRACKS OF THE EMERGING ACADEMIC WORKFORCE



This restructuring of academic work roles and careers has proceeded within the context of a larger reorganization of work in the global knowledge-based economy (see Handy, 1994; Musselin, 2010). That larger re-organization includes the rapid vanishing of high paying "blue-collar" (semi-skilled) jobs, the widespread emergence of contingent employment across all sectors of the economy, including the professions (medicine and law) and the de-localization of employment patterns (i.e., the disappearance of careers solely within a single organization and the emergence of entrepreneurial and self-framed, rather than organizationally-anchored, career paths). In the case of the U.S. and several other mature economies that restructuring has coincided with the cresting of broader demographic shifts that began as early as the 1960s with the emergence of the women's and Civil Rights movements (Keller, 2008). Central to those shifts has been the emergence of women in prominent roles in the professions, and in higher education into the status in some ways of a "new majority." To a lesser extent, these demographic shifts have meant the introduction of minorities, immigrant groups and foreign-born nationals into the higher education mainstream. The result has been a grafting of new demographic groups onto an academic workforce that is rapidly differentiating by function.

A final factor contributing to the contemporary higher education mix is the increased prominence of the professional fields and the emergence of the non-research university sector as the center of gravity of American postsecondary institutions. Historically, the traditional professions of theology, law and medicine were the foundation of the European universities with the liberal arts positioned as the relative newcomers. The American university, on the other hand, was built on the shoulders of the liberal arts, and only in the 20th century did the professions gain a secure foothold (Thelin, 2004). Today, on many campuses, professional *s*chools are the engines of fundraising, resource acquisition and power. This has meant the introduction to American campuses of centers of influence and large numbers of faculty outside the traditional arts and sciences. They come to the university without the traditional socialization in doctoral programs and not infrequently from post-professional training work roles outside academe. Similarly, over the past twenty years, the notable growth in American higher education has been in the "vocational" sectors—two-year community colleges and the for-profit sector, the only remaining growth sector within American higher education, now account for half of postsecondary institutions and half of student enrollment.

CONCLUSION

The American Faculty began the painstaking process of charting the scope and magnitude of deviations from the historic American academic model that were beginning to emerge largely under the radar screen of the system's gatekeepers. It identified incipient trends and postulated whether they constituted temporary aberrations or dislocations, or did they constitute genuine re-alignments of the model writ large? We concluded that, on balance, there seemed to be little temporary about these changes. In the years since 2006, much evidence has surfaced, accelerated by a national economic downturn that has had widespread influences on education funding at all levels (Yakoboski, 2009). Allowing for the uncertainties that attend projecting even a near-term economic future, we believe we are in a stronger position to extend the description of the sweeping trends in academic work and careers and are now beginning to assess with greater confidence their consequences for the system. In that sense, this new volume in-the-making represents a substantial extension and reframing of principal findings in *The American Faculty.*

In the last half-decade, higher education reform has become a major recurring theme in developed and developing countries, including the U.S., requiring a sharper focus on the global nature of American higher education (Wildavsky, 2010). That globalization continues to accelerate. Moreover, countries across the world are focusing as never before on their national systems and what they can learn from the evolving American system to advance their own competitiveness in an increasingly globalized economy (Clotfelter, 2010). In this sense, we intend to develop our extended work with a sense of an international audience in mind.

A new model is taking form and our ongoing analysis continues to explore the vibrant, volatile characteristics of American higher education. These efforts examine the larger dimensions of the post-secondary system, with more focused attention on the system's inextricable link to its core resource—the faculty. Lying at that dynamic institutional core is the hugely consequential, and swiftly unfolding, *future* of the academic profession. We'd best better understand that phenomenon.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Martin Finkelstein is professor of Higher Education at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. He received his PhD from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1978. Since then, he has taught at the University of Denver and Teacher's College, Columbia University and has served as a Visiting Scholar at the Claremont Graduate University, the Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, Japan and as a Visiting Professor, Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong.

Between 1989 and 1997, he served as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Institute for Collegiate Teaching and Learning, a state initiative to enhance student success at New Jersey's colleges and universities through policy research and faculty professional development. He is the author of The American Academic Profession (Ohio State University Press, 1988) and The New Academic Generation (with Robert Seal and Jack Schuster, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). His new book with Jack Schuster, The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers, was published in 2006 by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

Finkelstein has, together with Jack Schuster, been instrumental in documenting the faculty demographic and appointments revolution and in questioning the implications of these concomitant revolutions for faculty careers, the nature of academic work, the research enterprise and student educational experience. In so doing, he has worked closely with the IPEDS database (especially the Fall Staff Survey) and with the NCES' National Study of Postsecondary. He has served as a member of the technical review panel for the former set of surveys since 1988.

Since 2006, he has co-led the U.S. team conducting a 15-year follow-up to the 1992 Carnegie Foundation's International Survey of the Academic Profession, The Changing Academic Profession Survey. The first results of that study will be reported in the forthcoming volume, co-authored with William Cummings, *Scholars in the Changing American Academy: New Contexts, New Rules, and New Roles,* to be published by Springer in late 2011.

Jack H. Schuster is a Senior Research Fellow and Professor of Education and Public Policy Emeritus at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California. He is the 2007 recipient of the Association for the Study of Higher Education's Distinguished Career Award and the 2008 recipient of the American Education Research Association's Exemplary Research Award (Div. J/Postsecondary Education).

Prior to joining the Claremont Graduate University faculty in 1977, he was the Assistant Director of Admissions, Tulane University (1963-66), Legislative Assistant, and then Administrative Assistant, to Congressman John Brademas (1967-70). He next served from 1970 to 1977 as Assistant to the Chancellor at the University of California-Berkeley and as Lecturer in Political Science.

While a professor at CGU, he has also held appointments on sabbatical leaves of absence as Visiting Scholar at the University of Michigan's Center for the Study of Higher Education (1985); Guest Scholar in the Governmental Studies Program at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C. (1988); at the University of Oxford as Visiting Fellow at Brasenose College and as Research Associate in the Department of Educational Studies (1992); Visiting Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (1996); Visiting Scholar at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne (1999), and, most recently, as Fulbright Senior Specialist and Visiting Professor, University of Haifa (2006).

Schuster is author or co-author of various publications. His most recent book is The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers, co-authored with Martin J. Finkelstein, published by The Johns Hopkins University Press, (2006). This research was supported by TIAA-CREF and four national foundations. His Bachelor of Arts degree is from Tulane University (major in history, minor in philosophy), and he holds a J.D. from Harvard Law School, an M.A. in Political Science from Columbia University, and a Ph.D. in education (higher education emphasis) from the University of California, Berkeley.