

# Introduction: Understanding the Defining Aspects of the Academic Profession Through The Scholarship of Integration

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In 1973, D.W. Light, L.M. Mardsen, and T.C. Corl published a monograph titled *The Impact of the Academic Revolution on Faculty Careers*. In the acknowledgements to this volume, the authors note that this monograph is the outcome of a seminar on education in the Sociology Department at Princeton University. The authors recognize the contributions of the students enrolled to the development of ideas of this monograph.

The notion of the products of a graduate student seminar finding voice in a publication inspired this special issue of the *Journal of the Professoriate*. All of the articles included in this special issue are authored by students enrolled in a Ph.D. seminar titled “The American Academic Profession” offered by the Higher Education Leadership and Policy Program of Peabody College, Vanderbilt University in spring 2009. I led this seminar. Two of the assignments of this seminar involved a class presentation and a paper that focused on a review of literature on a selected topic on some aspect of the study of the academic profession. Reviews of literature resonate with the objectives of the scholarship of integration, a domain of scholarship delineated by Boyer (1990). To elaborate, Boyer (1990) posited that the scholarship of integration involves interpretation through the arraying of the research of others into larger intellectual patterns. Moreover, the scholarship of integration also involves the giving of meaning to isolated facts and the synthesis of knowledge in a discipline.

These student authored reviews of literature provide the basis for the eight articles included in this special issue of the *Journal of the*

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*Professoriate*. Although the authors make no claims for the exhaustiveness of these reviews, these reviews thoroughly center attention on the most significant dimensions of the topic addressed.

Defining aspects of the academic profession consist of the structure of the academic profession, the core functions of the academic profession and the careers of academic professionals. The articles of this special issue address enduring topics or emerging issues of significance to elements of these defining aspects of the academic profession.

### **The Structure of the Academic Profession**

Institutional type (Ruscio, 1987) and academic discipline (Ruscio, 1987; Storer & Parsons, 1968) constitute two powerful forces of differentiation in the structure of the academic profession. The missions of colleges and universities impact institutional structures (Ruscio, 1987). Such structures influence the work styles, attitudes, beliefs, reference groups, and the professional roles of college and university faculty members (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Finkelstein, 1984; Fulton & Trow, 1974; Ruscio, 1987).

Academic disciplines also play such a differentiating role in the structure of the academic profession. From their extensive review of the research literature, Braxton and Hargens (1996) concluded that the differences among academic disciplines are “profound and extensive.” In his article titled “Variation among Academic Disciplines: An Update on Analytical Frameworks and Research,” Willis A. Jones updates and extends the work of Braxton and Hargens (1996) by reviewing research published after 1996. Jones offers a conclusion similar to that of Braxton and Hargens as he states “there are substantial differences among academic disciplines in a number of areas with regards to the faculty.” His article concludes with recommendations for future research on academic disciplines.

The academic reward system constitutes another element in the structure of the academic profession. This system consists of external and internal rewards. External rewards involve colleague recognition for contributions made to research and scholarship. Forms of recognition from colleagues include election to leadership positions of academic and professional associations, appointment to the advisory boards of governmental agencies and other organizational entities, and appointment to the editorial boards of academic and professional journals

(Braxton, 1986). Internal rewards meted out by individual colleges and universities include annual salary increments, reappointment, promotion, and tenure. In the second article titled “Do Faculty Members Get What They Deserve? A Review of the Literature Surrounding the Determination of Salary, Promotion, and Tenure”, Toby Park centers attention on internal rewards of the academic reward system: salary, promotion, and tenure. He reprises Jerry Gaston’s question raised in his 1978 book *The Reward System of British and American Science* “Do people get what they deserve?” Based on his review of research on the determinants of these internal rewards, Park states that it remains unclear concerning whether faculty members get what they deserve. He points to important methodological issues regarding the research he reviewed.

An important question regarding the academic reward system is “Is there discrimination against women and minority faculty members based on their gender and race?” Jungmin Lee addresses this question in her article titled “The Numbers Are Not Enough: The Status and Experience of Female and Racial Minority Faculty Members.” In addressing this question, her review centers on the racial and gender composition of faculty in the United States, the wage gap across gender and races, and explanations for why women faculty and faculty of color are underrepresented and less rewarded: human capital, structural characteristics, and cultural factors. This article complements the previous article by Park.

Professional self-regulation constitutes another important element in the structure of the academic profession. The lay public expects professions to be self-regulating (Goode, 1969). Self-regulation entails an assumption of responsibility for ensuring that members of the profession perform their roles in a competent and ethical manner (Braxton, 1999). However, self-regulation necessitates social control. Social control refers to mechanisms developed to induce conformity to normative or ethical principles (Horowitz, 1990). In the case of the academic profession, considerable attention focuses on the social control of scientific misconduct. The fourth article of this special issue, “The Past, Present, and Future of Scientific Misconduct Research: What has been done? What needs to be done?”, tackles this important issue. Jungmin Lee’s review of literature and research consists of three parts. In the first part, Ms. Lee provides definitions of scientific misconduct, estimates of its prevalence, and possible explanations for scientific misconduct. The second part devotes attention to the literature and research on the social

control mechanisms of detection, deterrence, and sanctioning of scientific misconduct. Factors that hinder social control mechanisms receive consideration in the third part. Lee offers the troubling conclusion that “unless the current peer-review system and reward structure in academia change, it is not realistic to expect to effectively deter further scientific misconduct.” She offers suggestions for further research on scientific misconduct.

### **The Core Functions of the Academic Profession**

Research and teaching prevail as the core functions of the academic profession (Parsons and Platt, 1973). Academic capitalism and its encapsulation in faculty research role performance in the form of entrepreneurial behavior constitute an important issue with the potential for shaping the core function of research in the natural sciences. Academic capitalism involves institutional and professorial market or market-like activities to gain external monies (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). Market-like behaviors include faculty efforts to receive external grants and contracts as well as participate in university-industry partnerships (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997). In contrast, market behaviors include such for-profit efforts as spin-off companies developed from the results of faculty research. In the article titled “Academic Capitalism and Its Impact on the Academic Profession”, Toby Park provides a brief history of the development of the notion of academic capitalism and a review of literature on the impact of academic capitalism on faculty members. Park concludes that a shift towards the idea of academic capitalism is underway. However, he adds that little research evidence demonstrating the consequences of this shift exists. In closing, Park raises the question: will academic capitalism be a detrimental influence on the professorial status of the American professoriate?

In his important book *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, Boyer (1990) contended that the definition of scholarship requires broadening beyond a primary emphasis on discovery to include the scholarship of application, integration and teaching. His assertions wielded a profound impact on both scholarship and institutional efforts to broaden the parameters of what counts as scholarship. Although some evidence exists for the institutionalization of the four domains of scholarship (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002), the vast majority of faculty members have no publications reflective of the scholarship of teaching (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002). Thus, the scholarship of teaching remains underdeveloped as form of scholarship. Through

faculty engagement in the scholarship of teaching, the profession of teaching advances itself (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999). Faculty engagement in the scholarship of teaching can improve one's own teaching while also advancing the practice to teaching so others may benefit (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999). As a consequence, the scholarship of teaching stands as a topic worthy of consideration because of its potential for affecting the core functions of research and teaching.

In her article "The Scholarship of Teaching: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow," Amanda Ochoa sheds light on the uncertainties that remain in defining the scholarship of teaching. Without consensus on a definition of the scholarship of teaching, progress in the development of this domain of scholarship is problematic. Accordingly, Ochoa offers suggestions for the embracement of the scholarship of teaching by colleges and universities.

Although not a core function of the academic profession, service also stands as an aspect of professorial role performance. Ward (2003) points out that institutional promotion and tenure guidelines include service in their formulations. Faculty can serve their institutions as well as communities external to their college or university.

Participation in institutional governance constitutes one way faculty serve their institutions. In his article titled "Faculty Involvement in Institutional Governance: A Literature Review," Willis A. Jones provides an empirically based picture of faculty involvement in institutional governance by reviewing research focused on faculty opinions about shared governance and research centered on the areas in which faculty influence institutional governance. From his review, Jones concludes that faculty participation in institutional governance finds acceptance and is viewed as desirable. He also notes faculty express dissatisfaction in their level of involvement. Moreover, Jones concludes that faculty believe trust and communication exists between faculty and the administration.

### **Careers of Academic Professionals**

Hermanowicz (1998) distinguishes professions from other occupational groups as the work of professionals is viewed as a calling. Moreover, the work of professionals entails a great deal of commitment and a source of deep personal meaning (Hermanowicz, 1998). These formulations provide a backdrop for the careers of academic professionals. Careers have both an organizational and a personal dimension (Light, Marsden,

& Corl, 1973). The personal dimension involves the subjectively experienced professional life (Hermanowicz, 1998). Gaining a tenure-track position and then attaining tenure depict the prevailing model of the organizational career for the academic professional. However, the growing percentage of faculty that are either part-time or hold full-time non-tenure track positions erodes this model of the organizational career of academic professions. Such faculty members are termed contingency faculty. In her article titled "Contingency Faculty: Helping or Harming College Students? Amanda Ochoa appraises the current use of contingency faculty in colleges and universities. The effect of contingency faculty on undergraduate students stands as a particular focus of Ochoa's review of literature. Such effects include student learning, student persistence, and graduation rates. Thus, the growing proportion of contingency faculty affects both the construction of careers in academia and students.

### **Closing Thoughts**

The audience for this special issue of the *Journal of the Professoriate* includes policy makers, scholars, and students enrolled in graduate courses on the professoriate and the faculty members who instruct such courses. The contents of these articles should assist in the formulation of policy at the federal, state, and institutional level. Likewise, scholars and advanced doctoral students will find these articles of use in the development of their programs of research.

The articles of this special issue of the *Journal of the Professoriate* enhance our knowledge and understanding of the defining aspects of the academic profession addressed. However, a partial understanding emerges as other topics related to each of the defining aspects of the academic profession require treatment through the scholarship of integration. For example, the academic labor market constitutes a topic that pertains to both the structure of the academic profession and to careers. Teaching role performance stands as a topic germane to teaching as a core function of the academic profession. The adjustment of faculty new to the academic profession represents a topic related to the careers of academic professionals. Perhaps, the scholarly community will address these topics through the scholarship of integration.

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