

Modernizing the Workforce

INSIDE
HIGHER ED

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Make Work More Human For Your Institution's Workforce

Across industries, technology is changing the workforce, and higher education is no exception. The ability of leaders to attract, retain, and engage top staff and faculty impacts how well higher education institutions improve the business, raise institutional standing and support student success. Competition for the top researchers, faculty and staff is increasingly fierce. These constituents expect modern, personalized experiences, and institutions must embrace the latest technology to deliver them.

With an increase in adjunct faculty, later retirements for boomers, and millennials joining the workforce, higher education institutions need to run more agile departments and operations, and they're leveraging technology as an enabler of their HR transformation.

To outpace change in the face of an evolving workforce, organization, and business landscape, HR leaders are reimagining their role and beginning to think like a strategic partner. With this new focus, they're looking to:

- Treat employees like customers mirroring how businesses operate
- Focus not only on system usability but more importantly on workforce productivity to drive the university's mission
- Turn their department from being a cost center to a value generator helping drive success with digital leadership and talent development
- Take action that impacts the business with workforce modeling and creating a culture to foster work-life integration
- Move away from being just a center of excellence to creating a network of experts serving the functional area

We hope you find the following resources useful in helping you drive innovation in your HR strategy and make work more human for your institution's workforce.

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Introduction

Higher education is undergoing significant change – and bringing about that transformation will be difficult unless colleges and universities change how they run and manage their workforces, too.

How institutions are governed, who they hire, whether they outsource functions, how they prepare future leaders – all of these issues are in play and under discussion. The institutions that navigate these and other challenges will thrive; those that don't could struggle.

The articles in this booklet illustrate some of the leadership and employment issues facing campus leaders and explore some of the ways the institutions are responding.

Inside Higher Ed welcomes your comments on these articles and your thoughts on future coverage.

--The Editors
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News

A selection of articles by *Inside Higher Ed* reporters

Faculty Hiring After the Recession

BY GREG TOPPO // FEBRUARY 15, 2019

New hires of full-time faculty at public master's and doctoral institutions rose more than a decade ago, then declined after the recession -- while hires at baccalaureate institutions remained slow and steady.

A new research review finds that since the recession, hiring patterns for new full-time faculty members have fluctuated considerably at public four-year doctoral and master's institutions, while they have barely budged at public baccalaureate institutions.

The study, [released Thursday](#) by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR), based in Knoxville, Tenn., recounts the economic realities of higher education in the decade since the recession: enrollment that spiked and then fell for most types of colleges, government support that has failed to keep pace with enrollment, and a resulting shift in which institutional funding increasingly comes from tuition



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dollars.

In the new report, CUPA-HR said that before 2008, new hires of full-time faculty at public master's and doctoral institutions were "rapidly growing." But after the recession hit, there was a notable decline in

full-time hires -- a decline that continued until 2016, when institutions began to increase new hires. By contrast, hires of these instructors at public baccalaureate institutions remained relatively steady, if limited, over the entire period.

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For instance, from 2003 to 2018, the percentage of part-time faculty members in public baccalaureate colleges remained fairly stable, beginning at 33.7 percent and ending at 33.6 percent. In the same period, the percentage of part-time instructors at public master's colleges grew from 31.6 percent to 36.7 percent. At public doctoral colleges, it grew from 23.7 percent to 28.9 percent.

Jackie Bichsel, the group's research director, said baccalaureate institutions "were not willing to compromise their teaching faculty based on the results of the recession."

While master's and doctoral institutions continue to hire more new assistant professors, the figures have fluctuated considerably. At both public and private baccalaureate institutions, Bichsel said, the hiring has been "slow and steady."

"It just goes to, I guess, the steadiness of those baccalaureate institutions," she said.

Meanwhile, doctoral institutions continue to rely more than others on new, part-time faculty. "It is almost like they're more willing to compromise that teaching part in order to fulfill their budget goals," Bichsel said.

[George Mehaffy](#) of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, which represents many regional, master's-level, four-year institutions, said it's difficult to

make inferences from the statistics. While baccalaureate institutions are certainly not sacrificing high-quality instruction to balance budgets, he said, "We aren't, either."

He said the hiring statistics actually show that "our institutions were hit harder than other sectors in terms of funding -- particularly state funding." Mehaffy, vice president for academic leadership and change at AASCU, noted that flagship public universities "aren't as vulnerable as regional comprehensives to funding declines."

For public university leaders facing uncertain budgets, hiring more full-time, tenure-track faculty is risky because each new position is "potentially a 30-year commitment."

Even at universities with large numbers of such faculty, tight budgets mean that many of these instructors are taking on more of the work of university governance, teaching less in the process.

Nonetheless, he said, the idea that hiring more part-time or non-tenure-track faculty sacrifices quality isn't necessarily true.

While he'd admit that faculty turnover can affect critical faculty relationships that are "so important in student development," more factors come into play when talking about instruction.

"You have to approach the question of quality for teaching with a great deal of caution," he said.

CUPA-HR noted that the number of full-time faculty per 100 students in public institutions "has remained relatively unchanged," but that private institutions improved their full-time faculty-per-student ratio from 2003 to 2018.

In its [annual survey](#) of faculty compensation, CUPA-HR last year found that faculty salaries in 2017-18 increased by 1.7 percent over the previous year. Nontenured research faculty saw the highest increase, with tenure-track faculty seeing the lowest increase.

At a median age of 37, the group found, non-tenure-track research faculty tend to be "significantly younger" than tenured and tenure-track instructors, whose median age is 51. Nearly one-third of tenured and tenure-track faculty are age 60 or over.

For tenure-track faculty, the highest-paying disciplines in 2017-18 were legal professions, business, engineering, computer science and health professions. Low-paid adjunct faculty members made up nearly two-thirds of all instructors in associate's institutions, though they made up only one-third of faculty at doctoral institutions.

The recession, the group said, "had profound impacts" on both students and faculty. Understanding the impacts could help colleges and universities better deal with future disruptions, budget cuts and enrollment shifts, it said. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/02/15/decade-after-recession-colleges-take-divergent-hiring-paths>



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Ending 'Mom-and-Pop' Governance

BY RICK SELTZER// MARCH 1, 2018

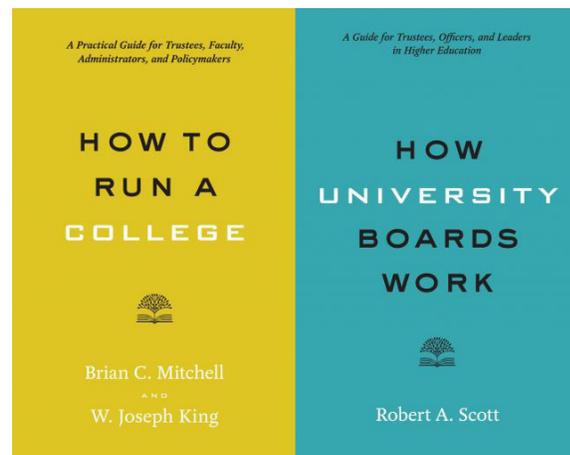
Authors break down the basics of university governance but can't resist looking at the big picture.

The challenges colleges and universities face are well documented and often intimidating.

[Population trends](#) will leave institutions in some parts of the country without enough traditional-age local students to fill classrooms, while stretching others' capacity. [Costs keep escalating](#), high sticker prices are a consistent source of angst and [constantly rising discount rates](#) leave many private colleges in the difficult position of not having enough money coming in even as they're perceived by students as being too expensive.

Yes, market conditions are difficult. But that doesn't mean higher education's leadership will escape scrutiny. It's worth wondering if governance practices currently in place are adequate for attracting good leaders, training them and putting them in a position to succeed in the face of challenges.

Some experts believe solutions have to start at the top, with chang-



es to the way shared governance plays out between trustees, administrators and faculty members. Among them are the authors of two books released in January by Johns Hopkins University Press, [How to Run a College](#) and [How University Boards Work](#).

"Can American higher education navigate through uncharted waters if the leadership relies on an unprepared, inexperienced captain and crew?" ask the authors of *How to Run a College*, Brian C. Mitchell

and W. Joseph King. Mitchell and King are both experienced college presidents and trustees who believe higher education's most important challenge is professionalizing its governance.

Failing to professionalize governance isn't good for anyone, said Mitchell, a former president of Bucknell University and Washington & Jefferson College, in an interview.

"There should be a clear delineation of authority and a clear understanding -- and a transparent

understanding -- of how power is executed on a college campus," he said. "Until then, we have a kind of mom-and-pop approach to governance, and that's not serving anyone well."

Mitchell and King argue that higher ed is suffering through a particularly bleak period, one that can seem unprecedented. But viewing the current era as a historical outlier can lead to damaging paralysis among college and university leaders. It is also historically inaccurate.

American higher education has already gone through and survived two similar periods of pressure, according to Mitchell and King. The first was a depression in the 1870s, and the second was the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Those eras, which the authors refer to as inflection points, were marked by hundreds of colleges and universities merging or closing. But they were also times of great adaptation and innovation.

Colleges and universities are nimble, Mitchell said. If today is indeed a third point of inflection, lessons can be drawn from the past to help colleges and universities survive.

Mitchell and King argue for colleges and universities to evolve, modernizing practices and monetizing assets. They examine major elements of college operations:

governance, finance, enrollment advancement, academic affairs, student life and athletics. They support shared governance, but it's clear they believe the system could work better if all parties refocused on educational strategies and transparency between different leaders.

"It's a misunderstanding of what trustees do, what faculty do and how their work relates that causes

don't attract as many criticisms related to size.

Voting boards should have no more than a dozen active members, Mitchell and King argue. Larger advisory boards can also play a separate role, approving policy and preventing boards from becoming insular, but they should be geared toward offering advice and helping with fund-raising.

It's a model like the one used by Harvard University, where the 30-member Board of Overseers influences strategy and carries certain responsibilities but is eclipsed in direct power by the 13-member Harvard

Corporation, which has fiduciary responsibility and approves major operations.

A Focus on Trustees

In *How University Boards Work*, Robert A. Scott doesn't go so far as to advocate for limiting voting boards to 12 members. He thinks 12 is on the small side, he said in an interview. Yet he also advocated for limiting the size of voting boards.

"It depends on the institution," he said. "Eighteen would be the low end -- certainly no more than 30. Eighteen to 24 is manageable. You can get in touch with everybody in a day."

Still, Scott, who is the former president of Adelphi University and Ramapo College, sees plenty to worry

“Can American higher education navigate through uncharted waters if the leadership relies on an unprepared, inexperienced captain and crew?”

many problems," said King, who is president of Lyon College. "If you have substantial malfunction or dysfunction, it's not going to go anywhere."

Some of the authors' greatest concerns are focused on the state of governing boards. Mitchell and King believe boards are often too big and too dysfunctional. Those at private universities often run more than 40 trustees deep and come with internal politics, which leads to complacency, they write.

While public universities may have board issues of their own, including charges that trustees are politically [motivated](#) or [appointed](#), their boards are typically smaller than private boards and therefore

about in boards.

Among his many concerns are that board members often know little about the higher education enterprise or their own institutions, and that board chairs sometimes act like emperors. Trustees with experience on other boards or in business frequently believe they do not need a guide when they start on college or university boards, he writes. Unfortunately, that's not the case.

Trustees need to be much more knowledgeable about their institutions than they are today, Scott believes. They need to know a college's history and heritage, its competitors and where it fits in the overall higher ed ecosystem. They also need continuing professional development. That support will help them understand how to navigate challenges.

Scott also argues for trustees to spend more time listening and asking questions -- and for others in university governance to do the

same. He advocates for presidents to eschew the corporate-style chief executive officer role in lieu of a chief education officer ideal, with an emphasis on being collaborative. Boards, he writes, should be a president's partner in establishing priorities.

Toward its end, *How University Boards Work* includes a list of ideas best described as policy priorities. For instance, Scott writes that colleges should be held accountable for graduation rates. He suggests they might pay more attention to student retention if they were forced to repay public financial aid dollars for students who drop out before graduating -- an idea that has parallels in [risk-sharing concepts](#) that have drawn interest at the federal level. He also suggests making non-need-based aid count as taxable income for a recipient's family, because so-called merit scholarships are a major cost driver among colleges.

The ideas are presented alongside

some changes colleges and universities could make on their own, like modifying class schedules to make better use of facilities. But the inclusion of policy ideas in a book aimed at trustees fits a larger idea: the big picture matters for colleges and universities, and their leaders, as they face the future.

It's a theme running through both books, even though they dedicate many of their pages to the basics of running a college or university. In practice, the big picture could mean a faculty member taking a more active role in student life, because much of what students learn on campus comes from outside the classroom. It could mean presidents being more engaged and transparent with faculty members, even in times of crisis. It could mean trustees advocating for higher education funding when they're meeting with politicians.

"Enterprise risk is not just about one's own institution," Scott said. "It's about the whole enterprise." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/03/01/new-books-examine-college-governance-and-how-it-can-adapt-changing-times>

Posttenure Review or a Plan to Undercut Tenure?

BY COLLEEN FLAHERTY // FEBRUARY 27, 2018

Right after U of Tennessee faculty members agreed on plan to toughen oversight of tenured professors, system proposed rules many say endanger academic freedom.

A joint committee of faculty members and administrators from across the University of Tennessee's four campuses spent months revising the system's posttenure review policy, which it acknowledged was outdated and needed strengthening. The committee included the university system's Board of Trustees in its process and its recommendations were adopted this year, with the goal of making posttenure review clearer and more meaningful.

So professors from across the system are baffled and alarmed by a new, hastily written add-on proposal from the trustees, with some saying it challenges the idea of tenure altogether.

"We're concerned they're putting together a very ambiguous board policy that threatens academic freedom and represents a huge service load on the faculty," said Beauvais Lyons, Chancellor's Professor of Art at the Knoxville campus and



president of its Faculty Senate.

Tennessee's current -- and still very new -- Enhanced Posttenure Performance Review (EPPR) policy says that a campus chief academic officer must initiate an assessment after a professor gets an overall "unsatisfactory" annual performance review rating (the lowest category) or two annual review ratings of "needs improvement" (the next-to-lowest rating) in a four-year period.

Professors may also request an enhanced posttenure review after at least four regular, annual review

cycles.

But earlier this month, professors found out that the trustees had written a new part of the policy, reserving the board's right to direct administrations to review "some or all tenured faculty of a campus, college, school, department or division at any given time or at periodic intervals, as the board in its discretion deems warranted."

Faculty members pushed back, saying that the proposal was too vague and ignored the role of the faculty in such matters. After some

back-and-forth, the board added language affirming “the importance of tenure in protecting academic freedom and thus promoting the university’s principle [sic] mission of discovery and dissemination of truth through teaching, research, and service.”

Yet [the policy](#) goes on to say that the board “recognizes its fiduciary responsibility to students, parents, and all citizens of Tennessee to ensure that faculty members effectively serve the needs of students and the university throughout their careers.”

Therefore, it says, the board “may require the [system] president to establish procedures under which a comprehensive peer review shall be conducted of all faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, in an academic program that has been identified as underperforming through an academic program review process.”

The president shall also establish, with board approval, “procedures for every tenured faculty member at a campus to receive a comprehensive peer review no less often than every six years.”

Such reviews may be “staggered” under the proposal, to avoid putting undo administrative work on faculty reviewers. But Lyons, of Knoxville, said the policy undeniably burdens professors with reviewing the work of their peers, top to bottom, every six years.

“The philosophy of the board is to

maximize faculty productivity, yet they’re doing it through a system that requires more service of faculty,” he said.

The program review clause, meanwhile, falsely equates faculty performance with program performance, Lyons said, and “runs the risk -- if they don’t like what the College of Social Work is doing, or if they don’t like an area of research in sociology -- of being used for retribution based on data that are not rooted in the academic mission.”

By data, Lyons was referring to metrics such as numbers of majors, enrollment and cost of instructional delivery that institutions

arts missions, for example.

Bruce Maclennan, associate professor of electrical engineering and computer science at Knoxville and chair of the systemwide University of Tennessee Faculty Council, said that body has multiple concerns about the proposal. It’s vague and seems to be redundant, he said, in that faculty members “already have rigorous annual reviews and performance that does not meet specified expectations can trigger an EPPR,” which can lead to termination.

And while the policy’s “peer review” feature is short on detail as of now, he said, “many faculty are concerned that regular posttenure re-

views will consume significant faculty time serving on review committees and perhaps also preparing review dossiers.”

Like Lyons, Maclennan said he, too, worried that the proposal could be “abused to tar-

get politically unpopular faculty or departments,” weakening tenure protections overall.

Monica Black, the Lindsay Young Associate Professor of History and president of Knoxville’s American Association of University Professors advocacy chapter, called the entire process “very rushed.” Faculty members have days to review and offer comment on the policy document, she said.

“We spent a lot of time creating a policy that is just now in place, and now this sloppy proposal is being put forth very quickly and in a very



The philosophy of the board is to maximize faculty productivity, yet they’re doing it through a system that requires more service of faculty.



are increasingly drawing on to, in administrative terms, streamline operations. Advocates of these academic reviews say that they help colleges and universities concentrate resources where they can make the most impact. But critics say that unless they’re done thoughtfully, with faculty input, such reviews paint an incomplete picture of program success or lack thereof. Numbers of majors don’t necessarily demonstrate the important role of more service-oriented departments in delivering general education, and thereby fulfilling institutions’ liberal

vague way.”

Lyons said the proposal's “principle” versus “principal” typo made the rush all the more obvious and suspect. He noted that there is a simultaneous [legislative effort](#) in Tennessee

to shrink the board from 27 members to 11, eliminating faculty seats and potentially concentrating the power of board leaders and the system president in the near future.

Gina Stafford, a system spokesperson, said in statement Monday that the proposed changes will be considered by the board at its

“A comprehensive peer review shall be conducted of all faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, in an academic program that has been identified as underperforming through an academic program review process.”

March meeting and are subject to further tweaking until then.

Tennessee is just the latest state to propose changes to tenure policies at its public universities. [A proposal](#) under consideration by the University of Arkansas System would expand terminable offenses

for faculty members, to include being uncollegial.

“Virtually all faculty around the state remain opposed to the changes recommended by the university lawyers,” said Joshua Silverstein, a professor

of law at the Arkansas system's Little Rock campus who has been vocal in his opposition to the proposal, referring to the current draft of the policy. With a Board of Trustees vote also tentatively planned for March, he said, those against the changes “need to make their voices heard now.” ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/02/27/debate-university-tennessee-over-posttenure-review-plan>

Helping Postdocs With Children

BY COLLEEN FLAHERTY // JUNE 22, 2017

First-ever national survey of postdocs who are parents reveals a lack of access to paid parental leave, pressures to return to work early and extra stressors for parents of color.

Postdoctoral fellows hopefully enjoy close mentor-mentee relationships with the principal investigators on their research grants. Few would probably expect those investigators to show up at the hospital after a baby arrived, asking when they planned to return to the lab, however. Yet that's what happened to one survey participant in a new study on parent postdocs from the National Postdoctoral Association and the Pregnant Scholar project of the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California, Hastings.

"So, what, about two to three weeks and you will be back?" the scientist reportedly asked the postdoc in her hospital bed. It's the kind of "ridiculous," professionally unacceptable treatment postdocs sometimes encounter due to a widespread lack of understanding or will to understand what their rights are, said Julie Fabsik-Swartz, executive director of the National Postdoctoral Association. And if you're a fa-

ther, Fabsik-Swartz said, "there's no prayer you're getting much time off in most places. You have to feel for this set of highly educated, highly trained people who have dedicated their time and resources to being a researcher -- in many cases, to help this country. They're being treated awfully."

The new report, called ["Parents in the Pipeline: Retaining Postdoctoral Researchers With Families,"](#) is based on the first-ever national survey of postdocs with children, which yielded responses from 741 postdocs about 800 birth and adoption experiences. A handful of participants participated in follow-up phone interviews, and the report relies on additional association data about postdoc benefit policies nationally.

The paper urges institutions to update outdated policies to reflect a new reality: that the average postdoc spends four to five years in that position and most are nearing



40 years old by the time they find a permanent job -- meaning postdocs increasingly are parents.

"The average postdoc today can't postpone solving the puzzle of work-life fit until tenure," the report says. "To add to the challenge, parents of this generation," more than their parents' generation, "feel the need to be more present for their children. For postdocs, the buzzers on their biological and research

clocks are undeniable -- and in conflict. Yet despite these shifts, many institutions make no provisions for parental leave or accommodations for postdoc parents."

A primary finding concerns the climate for pregnant workers who need health-related accommodations. While postdocs who requested pregnancy accommodations were provided them 93 percent of the time, they were less likely than other kinds of workers to request them. Just 40 percent of postdoc mothers did, and those in university appointments were especially unlikely to ask for help.

"I was too scared to let my colleagues in the laboratory know that I was expecting until I couldn't hide my pregnancy further," one woman said.

And that postdoc who was visited at the hospital by her investigator? She didn't feel she could say no, so she got a release from her doctor saying she could return to work after four weeks, despite having had a C-section birth with complications. Another respondent said lack of leave left her health "in tatters."

While these postdoc mothers continued their research, other survey respondents said they were pushed out because of their pregnancies or postbirth needs. One mother reported losing her appointment after her boss said he was "so sorry" about having no more funding. But the investigator soon hired a new postdoc to replace her. Another mother said that her boss referred to her children as her "constraints"

and withdrew funding from her contract to fund another postdoc.

Fathers also reported encountering hostility toward their new family roles. "Peers often phrase paternity leave as if it's a 'vacation' or you're at home doing nothing," one father said, adding that the prevailing mind-set "can lead to a view that you 'aren't serious about science' since you took time off."

Men are less likely than women to have access to leave and family-responsive policies, according to the study. "There is no such thing [as] leave for fathers," said one postdoc dad. "They won't even allow use of sick leave."

Respondents of all genders stressed that "family-responsive accommodations," such as scheduling flexibility or the ability to work from home, were essential to their success. If such accommodations had not been provided to one engineer, for example, he would "strongly consider leaving." Another "would not have been able to continue" and yet another "would just have to quit."

Parents of color reported facing hostility due to their new-parent status or pregnancy more often than their white counterparts, surprising the study's authors. Postdocs of color are less likely to ask for parental leave or accommodations and are twice as likely to be discouraged from taking leave when they do ask.

"The impact of the hostility and lack of support for new-parent postdocs is profound," the study

says.

"One in 10 postdoc fathers and one in five mothers reported that their [principal investigator's] response to their new-parent status negatively impacted the quality of their appointment over all. This number is far higher for postdocs of color. For some, the challenge wasn't worth it; 'Don't bother doing a postdoc,' a neuroscientist advised aspiring postdocs who want to have children. Instead, 'Work at McDonald's,' which would pay you equally or more, would give you more respect and [offer] a ray of hope through promotion."

Simple Fixes

What will it take to retain postdocs, who each represent decades of study and approximately \$500,000 or more in educational investments? "Simple adherence to federal law would go a long way," the study says, noting that data reveal numerous institutional violations of antidiscrimination laws.

"Much of what postdoc parents need is common-sense: formal pregnancy and parental-leave policies that follow the law, changes in scheduling, and an end to the hostility and stigma that all too often attaches to the basic human need to have a family," according to the study.

Other major findings include little to no access for postdoc mothers to paid maternity leave. Over half of institutions surveyed (53 percent) provide no paid leave to postdocs classified as employees, while postdocs categorized as trainees

and individually funded postdocs fare even worse. Externally funded postdoc moms have it worst of all, with 74 percent of surveyed institutions offering no paid leave to them. Paid leave time, when provided, was often described as too short. Many mothers reported having to “fight” for the leave they needed, and a smaller subset reported losing their jobs as a result of their investigators’ negative reaction to their pregnancy or need for time off. One in five mothers reported that their bosses’ responses had a negative impact on the overall quality of their appointment.

Well over half of institutions surveyed provide no paid leave for postdoc fathers. Eighty-five percent of institutions provide no access to paid leave for externally funded dads. Many postdoc fathers also reported having no access to other kinds of paid or even unpaid time off, such as sick or vacation days, to help welcome a new child home. One in 10 fathers said their investigators’ response to their new parenthood negatively affected their appointments. The rate for fathers of color was one in five.

Many postdoc mothers had no access to paid time off at all to care for children, including sick or vacation time. Externally funded postdocs, again, had it worst, with 53 percent of institutions excluding them from paid days off.

Regarding unpaid time off upon a child’s birth, a right in theory assured by federal law, benefits vary greatly by funding sources. Five percent of

employee postdoc mothers do not have access to such time, compared to 23 percent of institutional trainees and 44 percent of externally funded postdocs.

Over all, postdocs reported confusion about whether or not their institutions had parental leave policies applicable to them -- even after having gone through the process themselves. Human resources offices reportedly often misinterpret relevant laws and “struggle to navigate the varying grant-related policies that apply to postdocs,” according to the study. This is complicated by different funders having different policies for leave.

Additional problems include investigators’ reported unwillingness to grant accommodation requests, such as postdocs’ ability to work from home until their children are old enough to attend child care, or to attend work on different days of the week. Several postdocs reported leaving their positions when these requests weren’t met.

On-campus child care was also scarce, with postdocs commonly reporting being on waiting lists for a year or more. Other care was also expensive, with it in some cases costing 50 to 100 percent of postdoc salaries.

Postdoctoral positions were originally intended to be temporary stops for advanced training on the way to a permanent position. Now, critics say, they’re the backbone of a system dependent on if not addicted to cheap labor, with postdocs often spending years upon years in

such positions instead of months. The National Institutes of Health, for example, established a rule saying postdocs can’t work there for longer than five years, unless they’re promoted to research fellows, which gets them a maximum of three more years. Altogether, that’s longer than a tenure probationary period.

One of the report’s major recommendations is that every campus create an office for postdoc services and assistance. But does creating offices for postdocs and otherwise shoring up institutional policies regarding postdocs risk further institutionalizing what’s been called the “permadoc” problem? That’s where young scholars linger in postdoc assignments, lacking the opportunities to truly launch independent careers. Those involved with the study said ignoring the problem does more harm than anything, and that centralizing services for postdocs may help prevent their exploitation.

“The postdoc position is supposed to be a training position, and having a postdoc office is just a natural extension for that, making sure that these graduates have everything they need -- whether it’s advice on maternity or paternity leave or advice on their benefits based on how they’re categorized on campus,” said Kate Sleeth, associate dean of administration and student development and professional education at Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope and chair of the National Postdoc-

toral Association's Board of Directors. Sleeth spent seven years as a postdoc and said she found her own campus postdoc office helpful in that it made her aware of benefits she didn't know she was entitled to.

"A lot of the time, rules and policies exist, it's a just a matter of whether postdocs are aware of them," she said. "They're really there in an advisory role, to give the postdoc advice. If something should happen, they can advise the postdoc on what to do."

Jessica Lee, the report's lead author and a staff attorney at the Center for WorkLife Law at Hastings,

said many of the problems identified in the report are linked to some institutions' failure "to catch up to the new reality of longer-term postdocs and provide the formal support policies or structures they need." Policies established when postdocs were more likely to be transient and male don't meet current needs, and institutions that "turn a blind eye to postdoc needs, for fear of institutionalizing the postdoc, may be turning a blind eye to discrimination," she said.

The hostility of many primary investigators toward postdoc parents, for example, is "unacceptable

and in many cases illegal, and it is not only the [investigator] that is on the hook. Universities must prevent and respond to discrimination, and one of the best ways to start is by establishing clear policies that set the standard." Whether a postdoc parent has a positive experience -- as many subjects did -- or leaves research entirely shouldn't depend on the "goodwill" of the investigator.

There must be "structures in place to provide guidance and accountability," Lee said. "We expect no less for our students and faculty and we should expect no less for our postdocs." ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2017/06/22/survey-parent-postdocs-reveals-lack-access-paid-parental-leave-pressures-return-work>

Criticism Over IT Outsourcing Decision

BY LINDSAY MCKENZIE // JULY 8, 2019

Struggling to keep up with technology challenges, Washtenaw Community College plans to pay a third party to manage all of its IT functions. The decision has drawn criticism from faculty and staff members.

For three days in June 2017, Washtenaw Community College in Ann Arbor, Mich., experienced a complete network shutdown.

The negative impact on the college was immediate. Students couldn't attend online classes or complete their homework assignments. New student applications and fall semester registrations couldn't be processed. Many functions of the college ground to a halt.

Wishing to prevent any future outages, Rose B. Bellanca, Washtenaw's president, commissioned a comprehensive review of the college's entire IT infrastructure and staffing.

Working with IT consultants CampusWorks, the college embarked on a two-year assessment of its IT capabilities and practices. Even with increased support for its IT staff, the review suggested, technical challenges facing the college continued to outpace its resources. Cybersecurity threats, aging IT systems, increased demand for online learning and classroom technology,



Washtenaw Community College

and difficulty attracting and retaining IT talent are putting pressure on many colleges, not just WCC.

"The advances in technology have far outpaced what can be reasonably expected from our internal capabilities and continue to grow exponentially," Bellanca said in a May [news release](#). "To do nothing in the face of the changing technology environment would be irresponsible especially with respect to consistent and increasingly sophisticated data security threats."

The college's proposal, presented to the Board of Trustees on May 21, is to contract with higher education software and IT service provider Ellucian to provide technology management services, including on-site

support staff at the college. Under the proposal, which was passed in a [5-to-2 vote](#) by the board June 25, Ellucian will be responsible for all current and future technology needs of the college.

Ellucian, perhaps best known for its higher education enterprise resource planning (ERP) system Banner, provides technology management services to more than 130 higher education institutions, including 90 community colleges.

The cost of the five-year contract with Ellucian will be approximately \$5.2 million a year, which represents a \$600,000 saving over the college's current IT spending, Washtenaw said in a news release. The deal is "all-inclusive, fixed and

not subject to escalation.”

The arrangement would obviate the need for 31 full-time staff employed by the college. All will be offered the opportunity to continue working at the college as Ellucian employees.

Those who don't want to be employed by Ellucian will be offered a “transition assistance plan,” the college said. For employees with at least 10 years of service, this would include a year's salary and medical coverage, down to six months for employees with five to 10 years of service, and three months for employees who have been at the college for less than five years, local news site [MLive reported](#). All full-time employees will be offered career coaching through Right Management and an extension of their WCC tuition benefit for five years. The college has not shared any plans to compensate its handful of part-time IT staff members.

“This decision was made after a long and careful review and with the knowledge that many good people would be affected,” said Bellanca. “We believe this proposal best balances the needs of our employees by providing an opportunity to join Ellucian's team with the needs of our students and community. It was a difficult decision, but one made in the best interests of our college.”

In a three-hour board meeting on

“ A comprehensive peer review shall be conducted of all faculty members, both tenured and non-tenured, in an academic program that has been identified as underperforming through an academic program review process. ”

June 4, which included a presentation from Ellucian representatives, dozens of Washtenaw community members and several IT employees appealed to the board to reject the proposal, some sounding on the verge of tears at the thought of losing valued colleagues and friends.

Francisco Roque, a lead system engineer who has worked at the college for more than 20 years, called for more consistent leadership and direction of the IT department. In the past few years, WCC has had three different interim CIOs. The leadership of these “revolving CIOs” has resulted in some “big missteps” that were not the fault of the IT staff, he said. The current CIO, Peter Bosco, is an employee of CampusWorks and was formerly CIO of SunGard Higher Education -- a company that merged with Datatel in 2012 to form Ellucian.

Claims that the college's IT systems are “too complex for us to handle” are false, said Roque. “I've also heard that our IT systems include too many older or legacy components,” he said. “But legacy issues are standard in any IT department, and with our decades of institution-

al knowledge, we understand these and their place at the college.”

Network outages, like the one the college experienced in 2017 as a result of misconfigured hardware, can happen any-

where, said Roque. “My coworkers responded to our outage quickly, working nonstop around the clock both with each other and with vendors to resolve the issue and prevent it from happening again,” said Roque. Other speakers pointed out that IT management partnerships are no guarantee of perfect service. Muskegon Community College, another Michigan college that has its IT managed by Ellucian, experienced a weeklong shutdown of some computer systems in 2018 after a security breach.

Several faculty members spoke about the dedication of their IT staff. Mary Mullalond, an English professor at the college, said she was “very concerned” about losing staff with deep institutional knowledge, and expressed doubt about the “extremely swift” transition plan the college has proposed. Currently, the IT department trains faculty and staff members in various computer programs through the Teaching and Learning Center; Mullalond suggested it was unlikely Ellucian would be able to find someone to take over that responsibility by August.

Breege Concannon, a chemistry professor at Washtenaw, also had questions about how the transition would work. "Is Ellucian going to be here? Will I be able to call them up on the day before my lab and say, 'Can you come and update 24 laptops before tomorrow?'" she asked, adding, "I seriously doubt it."

It's not unusual for colleges, particularly ones with limited resources, to outsource some portion of their IT functions, said Kenneth C. Green, founding director of the Campus Computing Project and a blogger for *Inside Higher Ed*. There is a long history of colleges working with companies like CampusWorks to find temporary IT leadership. But it's not clear that colleges are outsourcing IT management more now than they did a decade ago, said Green. "These things ebb and flow. There's not a lot of consistency to it."

Decisions to contract with an IT management company such as Ellucian are often driven by changes in leadership -- a new president wanting to rapidly improve services on campus, for example, said Green. Outsourcing IT management doesn't mean that everything on campus is suddenly done remotely, he said.

Many employees may remain on campus but will no longer be employees of the university -- "much

like campus bookstores or food services," said Green.

Washtenaw leaders have said that a big advantage of partnering with Ellucian is its expertise of its own ERP system, Banner, which the college already uses. It's possible that as an existing customer, Washtenaw might get a good deal on bundled services, said Green. It may also be easier for the college to request staff be "swapped out" if they don't meet performance tar-

“ Is Ellucian going to be here? Will I be able to call them up on the day before my lab and say, 'Can you come and update 24 laptops before tomorrow?' I seriously doubt it. ”

gets, he said.

The conversation about whether or not to outsource IT staff is similar to the conversation about whether or not to move to the cloud, said Green. Many CIOs believe that moving from college-hosted applications to cloud services can save money in the long term, as they don't have to purchase their own hardware. But shifting to a subscription model means colleges can be subjected to steep price hikes, he said.

Chris Collins, senior vice president and chief customer officer at Ellucian, said technology management contracts vary. "Our contracts range from partial to full-support

contracts, multiyear, at a fixed fee for the life of the contract," he said in an email. "This enables institutions to have better insight and surety regarding costs for IT on a multiyear basis."

"We see a demand for technology management growing," said Collins. "The trend we see in the evolving cloud environment is the critical need for data protection and cybersecurity, and the rapid pace of digital transformation. Today, schools

need more flexibility and different ways to meet those challenges."

Kevin Davis, chief information officer at Davidson College, a private liberal arts college in North Carolina, said there are

many IT functions that colleges can outsource.

"A number of schools have outsourced their residence hall internet service and cable/video services to companies like Apogee, for instance," he said. "Some schools have outsourced extended-hour support, especially where required to meet requirements around supporting online programs."

There is also "a fair amount of outsourcing of information security work," he said. Information security is a particularly "good use case" for outsourcing, said Davis, particularly for smaller colleges that may struggle to justify hiring someone to work on this issue full-time.

Modernizing the Workforce

Davis believes the number of small colleges considering these options could increase in the future. "Smaller schools in rural or even suburban areas could face increasing pressure recruiting tech workers drawn to cities," he said. "Outsourcing can be an option for keeping key services operational in an environment where adding local staff isn't likely."

The notion of whole-enterprise

outsourcing, as Washtenaw is proposing to do with Ellucian, is not something Davis feels totally comfortable with.

Outsourcing specific services gives colleges more control to decide "what to locally source versus what to hire out," he said. By breaking IT functions into smaller realms, such as networking, security, application support or database administration, colleges may be able to

more easily compare outsourcing costs and services, he said. This approach would allow colleges to keep more "high-touch" functions such as user support, instructional design and academic technology in-house.

"That said, there are plenty of cases of whole-function outsourcing in industries to firms like IBM and the like, so never say never," said Davis. ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2019/07/08/washtenaw-community-college-outsources-its-it-staff>

Effectiveness, Defined Broadly

BY DOUG LEDERMAN // APRIL 8, 2016

New volume of research examines various aspects of higher education performance, going well beyond labor market outcomes to include academic quality and socioeconomic equity.

"Effectiveness" and "efficiency" are dirty words to some people in academe, often promoted by government technocrats or by those who believe higher education can be reduced to measurable outcomes that show up on the bottom line.

Steven Brint and Charles Clotfelter don't fit into either category. But as editors of [a new volume](#) of the Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences entitled "Higher Education Effectiveness," the scholars from University of California at Riverside and Duke University, respectively, accept the idea that "effectiveness" -- defined as how well an organization is meeting a set of agreed-upon objectives -- is a perfectly reasonable thing to try to assess within higher education.

But that depends, in part, on how broadly one defines the objectives of higher education, they say.

"Most discussions of higher education effectiveness today focus on graduating as many students as possible at a low cost while trying to en-



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sure that these students are prepared for the labor market," Brint said via email. "Our book looks at effectiveness in terms of the historically important objectives of higher education. We think of human capital development more broadly than the term 'prepared for the labor market' suggests, and we are interested in the distribution of opportunities for high-quality educational experiences across racial-ethnic and socioeconomic groups. We also emphasize the quality of research produced by the faculty, a key to the con-

tinuing strength of U.S. higher education. We are sympathetic to current thinking on cost efficiency, but we look at efficiency in the context of these historically important objectives."

The papers in the volume provide evidence that the editors strive for a definition of effectiveness that goes well beyond degree production or faculty productivity. Two studies examine the quality of teaching and level of student achievement in science, mathematics, engineering and technology courses. Another examines historical data to

make the case that the University of Wisconsin at Madison and some other flagship universities have over several decades expanded access for undergraduate students from the top income quartile at the expense of those in the middle two quartiles. Yet another finds that “students in states with particularly large increases in public four-year tuition costs were substantially more likely to enroll in less-selective public four-year and two-year institutions in the state.”

Two other studies in the volume are particularly distinctive, in part because they challenge some of the memes favored by many of the usual champions of higher ed effectiveness.

Research by three Northwestern University scholars and a professor at SUNY Downstate Medical Center takes aim at the “college for all” movement, or at least the version of it that suggests many more Americans should get bachelor’s degrees.

The authors, led by James E. Rosenbaum, a professor of sociology, education and social policy at Northwestern, do not take issue with the reams of data showing that bachelor’s degree graduates earn much more and have other career advantages over those with lesser degrees or high school degrees. “College for all” advocates, the researchers say, cite those data to “encourage students to see bachelor’s

degrees” but “mostly” ignore subbaccalaureate credentials such as associate degrees or certificates.

neither should they be discouraged, as the authors suggest they often are, from getting a shorter-term credential than the B.A.

“Our society gives youth a too narrow vision of college options, careers and the academic requirements for attaining them. In particular, while most students pursue B.A. de-

grees that may have low odds of success for the most disadvantaged among them, they often ignore valuable sub-B.A. credentials,” they write. “We do youth a disservice by avoiding mention of sub-B.A.s and their desirable features. Advocates of the universal B.A. pursuits should reconsider blindly advising all students into a singular goal that prevents them from seeking sub-B.A. credentials that offer fewer academic and financial obstacles, better odds, desirable outcomes, and the potential to pursue B.A. plans later.”

Another study in the volume questions not whether it’s appropriate to try to measure how colleges perform, but that doing so in flawed ways can create serious problems. Not subtly, the researchers point their finger at approaches like the Obama administration’s now-abandoned plan to rate colleges.

The analysis by Michal Kurlaender and Scott Carrell of the University of California at Davis and Jacob Jackson of the Public Policy Institute of Califor-



Most discussions of higher education effectiveness today focus on graduating as many students as possible at a low cost while trying to ensure that these students are prepared for the labor market.



But they analyze a federal database of 2004 high school graduates to make several key points:

- Nearly half of students who enter college with the worst academic preparation do not earn any credential at all.

- Those who get some college education but no credential have little edge in the employment market over students with just a high school degree. Students from low-income backgrounds and those with low test scores are disproportionately among those who strive for but fail to complete a bachelor’s degree.

- Students who complete a post-secondary certificate have academic qualifications that are similar to (if not lesser than) those with “some college” education -- but have better job market outcomes than those students.

The researchers marshal those data not to argue that academically underprepared students from low-income backgrounds should settle for an associate degree or certificate, rather than strive for a bachelor’s degree. But

nia dissect data on student transfer, persistence and completion from California's 108 community colleges and find, as one would expect, that there is great variation in how they fare.

And being at a better institution matters: "Going from the 10th to the 90th percentile of campus quality is associated with a [37.3 percent] increase in student transfer, a [20.8 percent] increase in the probability of persisting, a [42.2 percent] increase in the prob-

“ Advocates of the universal B.A. pursuits should reconsider blindly advising all students into a singular goal that prevents them from seeking sub-B.A. credentials that offer fewer academic and financial obstacles, better odds, desirable outcomes, and the potential to pursue B.A. plans later. ”

ability of transferring to a four-year college, and a [26.6 percent] increase in the probability of completion," they write.

But they further examine the data by adjusting for the characteristics of the colleges' students, and find that

the largest positive change being 75 and the largest drop, negative 49," they write. "Our results suggest that policy makers wishing to rank schools based on quality should adjust rankings for differences across campuses in student-level inputs." ■

the rank ordering of the institutions changes enormously when the makeup of their student bodies is factored in.

"The average campus changed plus or minus 30 ranks,

<https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/04/08/series-studies-seeks-gauge-higher-ed-effectiveness-defined-broadly>

Views

A selection of articles by *Inside Higher Ed* reporters

'Brave New Work' and the Crisis of Higher Ed Careers

BY JOSHUA KIM // JUNE 5, 2019

How are you feeling about your job?

Brave New Work starts with the observation that two out of three people feel disengaged from their jobs. The book seeks to answer the question of why work has become so miserable for so many people.

The problem, according to Dignan, is that employers persist in designing work around an outmoded model of industrial production. Workers are treated as parts of a machine that must be managed, controlled, supervised, and maximized. The result is alienation, burnout, turnover, and mental absenteeism.

The theme of *Brave New Work* is that organizations have the power to reinvent the relationship between employer and employee. Dignan profiles a range of companies that have rewired the employment cul-

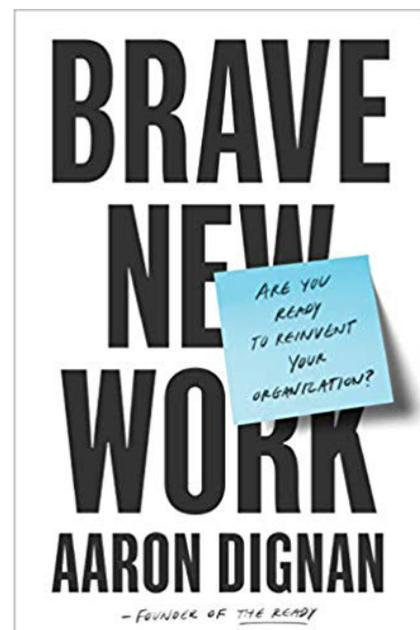
ture to prioritize autonomy, trust, flexibility, and independence. These "self-managed" organizations are "people-positive" and "complexity-conscious," the two traits that Dignan believes are foundational mindsets for ensuring an engaged workforce.

While reading *Brave New Work*, I kept thinking about how a student of work might evaluate the world of higher ed employment.

Are the levels of employee disengagement at colleges and universities commensurate with the broader world of work?

Are faculty and staff as disengaged from their jobs as the average corporate, nonprofit, or government worker?

My initial response would be to



answer "no." We higher ed people love our jobs. Right? We must, as how else can you explain the trade-offs and sacrifices necessary for a

higher ed career.

Can we say, however, that those of us who work in higher education are better off than other workers?

In *Brave New Work*, Dignan makes a series of recommendations for how organizations can improve employee engagement and productivity. He recommends that decision-making authority be pushed to the edges. He thinks that organizations should be more transparent in their operations and decision making.

Employees, according to Dignan, should be trusted to manage their time and to make decisions without levels of approval and sign-off.

These all seem like sensible recommendations. But how much do they apply to a higher education system where only a shrinking proportion of the workforce has any measure of job security, autonomy, and adequate compensation.

Today's system of higher education resembles a pyramid, with a large base of adjuncts and contingent faculty supporting an ever smaller number of tenure track / tenured faculty.

University staff - who make up the majority of university employees - are treated as an inferior caste. Staff remain outside of institutional

governance processes and are not eligible for the job protections that come with tenure.

Everyone working for colleges and universities faces a sort of permanent scarcity. A structural lack of resources brought on by diminishing public support, demographic headwinds, and costs that are rising faster than revenues.

As the core economic model of tuition funding combined with outside (public) support has eroded, colleges and universities have responded by cutting costs. Demands of the 24/7/365 university have risen, while headcounts have decreased. The result is that there are not enough faculty and staff available on our campuses to meet the demands of the work.

Despite all these problems, it is also true that almost everyone who works in higher education believes that the work is deeply important. Higher education is our most important engine of opportunity creation. In educating our students and creating new knowledge, colleges and universities are organizations committed to improving lives and communities.

The mission and promise of higher education seem to transcend the structural challenges of building a

career in higher education.

Smart, ambitious, talented, and hardworking people continue to fight to overcome the barriers of building economically viable careers in higher education for the chance to teach and create knowledge.

How much do we know about what higher education employment looks like from the perspective of employees?

Are the same forces that are driving employee disengagement in sectors outside of higher education impacting the work experience for those of us working at colleges and universities?

Books like *Brave New Work* -- books not about higher ed - can be useful in catalyzing discussions about the present and future of higher ed employment.

What are the factors that support or inhibit your engagement in your higher ed work?

What are the changes that you would like to see at your college or university that would make you feel engaged, empowered, and energized?

What books about work have you read that have helped you think about the world of higher ed employment? ■

<https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/technology-and-learning/brave-new-work-and-crisis-higher-ed-careers>

Preparing for Tomorrow With Online Professional Development

BY RAY SCHROEDER // SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

We are entering the fourth industrial revolution, in which jobs and careers are changing at a dizzying pace.

The fourth industrial revolution is upon us! It is unlike any previous cultural change we have confronted. Sure, the previous revolutions moved us from rural to urban environments; shifted our dependence on animals to machines; and even connected us digitally to each other in ways we had never imagined.

[Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and chairman of the World Economic Forum, says](#), “This fourth industrial revolution is, however, fundamentally different. It is characterized by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human.”

The impact in the working world is profound. Overall in the U.S., [the average number of years that an employee stayed with an employer as of last year was 4.2](#). In some fields it was higher, but in others, such as the leisure and hospitality field, it was just over two years. Note that those numbers account for years with an employer, not in a given job.



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So, a worker may have changed jobs within the same corporation or agency over that time. That means that workers are in a state of constant retraining and development to take on the new responsibilities of their changing jobs.

At stake for workers is continuing a livelihood that will provide for their needs and the needs of their families. The McKinsey Global Institute [reports that more than 375 million jobs will be lost or changed in the coming decade](#):

“Our scenarios suggest that by 2030, 75 million to 375 million workers (3 to 14 percent of the global

workforce) will need to switch occupational categories. Moreover, all workers will need to adapt, as their occupations evolve alongside increasingly capable machines. Some of that adaptation will require higher educational attainment, or spending more time on activities that require social and emotional skills, creativity, high-level cognitive capabilities and other skills relatively hard to automate.”

For most people in this emerging fourth industrial revolution, professional development is not an option; it is a necessity. But that doesn't mean it should be chore.

Modernizing the Workforce

In fact [Mary Shindler, senior program manager on the learning and development team at LinkedIn, says](#), "Data is showing that team members who engage in learning are found to be happier and feel more satisfied in their careers. That's a significant benefit, both for the employee and the business. Learners who are engaged in their work are happy. Happy people do their best work. Imagine a workforce where employees are happy, engaged and doing the best work of their careers. That's what we're hoping to achieve with L&D."

Continuing professional development is not a once-every-four-years kind of experience. It is ongoing and incremental. Vivian Kloosterman,

[the founder of the Continuing Professional Development organization, writes](#), "Sometimes it is mandated by professional organizations or required by codes of conduct or codes of ethics. But at its core it is a personal responsibility of professionals to keep their knowledge and skills current so that they can deliver the high quality of service that safeguards the public and meets the expectations of customers and the requirements of their profession."

We in higher education must take on the challenge of the emerging fourth industrial revolution to prepare learners for what has come and is yet to come in the workplace. Opportunities abound if we

are prepared to meet the challenge in cooperation with employers and states.

Delivery is, by necessity in most cases, online so that workers can continue their daytime duties while pursuing development on a schedule that fits their lives. It must be reliable, responsive and just in time to meet the needs as they emerge.

Are you working with colleagues and employers to identify needs and skills that will fuel the future? Is your college or university actively engaged in creating midcareer development courses and programs to advance your learners in their fields? How will the fourth industrial revolution change the mission and practice of your institution? ■

Bio:

Ray Schroeder is associate vice chancellor for online learning at the University of Illinois Springfield.

<https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/blogs/online-trending-now/preparing-tomorrow-online-professional-development>

Getting the Big Hires Right

BY THOMAS J. PFAFF // JUNE 26, 2019

Thomas J. Pfaff explores what is causing executive leaders in academe to leave their positions so quickly and why their replacements so often come from outside the institution.

One out of six provosts lasts no more than a year on the job. As many as half of them stay in the position for only two to five years. Deans average around just four years. Presidents have dropped from seven years to under five, with four recently dismissed with little warning, each with no more than four years on the job.

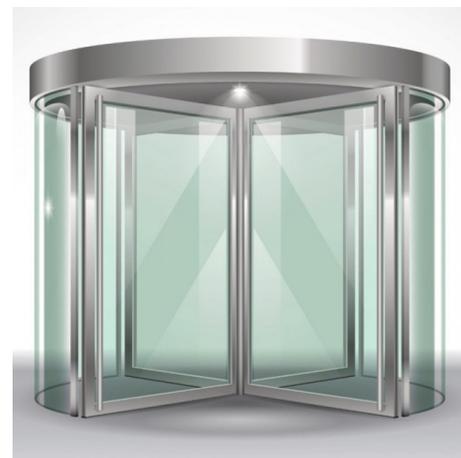
Meanwhile, more than 80 percent of college presidents are external hires. By way of contrast, only about 30 percent of CEO hires for major corporations are external hires, and some people believe that even 30 percent is too high.

Higher education is a long-term endeavor that is almost entirely dependent on human capital. It is difficult for short-term leaders to plan for the long haul and develop the human relationships and trust necessary for effective leadership. What is causing executive leaders in academe to leave their positions so quickly? And why do their replacements so often come from outside the institution?

The positions themselves may be flawed, but the hiring process may also be a good part of the problem. Academe appears to have an inherent bias in favor of external candidates and against internal ones, whose strengths may be in potential more than credential. But the skills required to be an effective college administrator are similar to those of business leaders. According to Claudio Fernández-Aráoz, a senior adviser at a global executive search firm, in the *Harvard Business Review*:

“As business becomes more volatile and complex, and the global market for top professionals gets tighter, I am convinced that organizations and their leaders must transition to what I think of as a new era of talent spotting -- one in which our evaluations of one another are based not on brawn, brains, experience or competencies, but on potential.”

Just as with business managers, the job of a dean, provost or president is increasingly changing and al-



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ways complex, and past experience or credentials may not be a predictor of future success. In the same article, Fernández-Aráoz puts forth five key qualities of “high potentials,” or those who are likely to succeed as they move up in an organization: motivation, engagement, curiosity, insight and determination.

In hiring in higher education, the focus should be more on these poten-

tials than on particular credentials, acknowledging the fact that internal candidates have advantages -- especially if they are identified early and their potential is fostered within the academy.

Motivation. According to Fernández-Aráoz, a leader is ideally motivated by “big collective goals,” “shows deep personal humility” and is invested in “getting better at everything they do.” He observes that “if someone is driven purely by selfish motives, that probably won’t change.” Given short tenures and consistent movement, external hires often appear to be motivated more toward their next step and less invested in their current institution.

That stands in stark contrast to faculty members, even non-tenure-track faculty, who often spend 30 or more years at the same institution. It is possible that working to develop leadership talent among such faculty members would result in leaders who are more likely than external hires to be motivated by moving the institution forward, while also having longevity in the position. That, in turn, could lead to greater trust and more positive relationships between faculty and administrators.

Engagement. The enterprise of higher education depends heavily on personal interactions among faculty, staff, students and administrators, and

it needs leaders who can connect with and motivate people. In short, higher education is a human capital business where feelings and morale matter. A single poor high-level administrator who creates negative feelings on the campus has a lasting impact, even long after that person leaves.

Internal candidates offer clear advantages over external candidates in that they have networks already in place, they don’t need a year just to get to know their colleagues, they are fully aware of the history left by past ad-

ideas to the campus, yet often such hires simply bring knowledge of their past institution’s practices. That can result in changes that reflect a former institution, rather than those that fit the college’s current time, place and culture.

In fact, internal candidates are more likely to understand aspects of the institution that need to change. If curious and open to candid feedback, they will seek new paths for the campus they’ve long served that fit its goals and mission.

“It is difficult for short-term leaders to plan for the long haul and develop the human relationships and trust necessary for effective leadership.”

How do we identify curious candidates? Just because a candidate is a good scholar in their field does not mean they are broadly curious, nor does a long list of publications in a narrow

ministrators, and their own strengths and weaknesses are largely known to the campus.

That allows a qualified internal hire to more quickly build and leverage the human capital necessary for leadership. Internal hires are also likely to be perceived as committed to the long-term, thus providing an incentive for the campus community to invest in them. Regardless of the candidate, the hiring process should involve asking candidates how they will engage the campus community and connect with people.

Curiosity. People tend to believe that external hires will bring fresh new

area of interest. While a curriculum vita that is broad in both scholarly expertise and types of activities is a starting point, thoughtful interview questions are even more important.

In an interview, for example, candidates should be asked about the most recent books they have read rather than those they have written. Plenty has been written on the importance of reading and continuous learning. John Rampton has reported in *Entrepreneur*, for example, that:

“During his five-year study of more than 200 self-made millionaires, Thomas Corley found that they don’t watch TV. Instead, an impressive 86

percent claimed they read -- but not just for fun. What's more, 63 percent indicated they listened to audiobooks during their morning commute."

A key goal of any executive search should be to identify candidates who read beyond their academic discipline.

Hobbies and interests matter, too, as curious people are not just curious at work. For example, the Rebels at Work essay, "The Rebel Gardener," describes the connection between what is learned as a gardener and the skills required as a leader.

External candidates may be just as curious as internal candidates, but an institution that wants to develop a pipeline of future administrators can identify curious internal candidates earlier in their careers and give them opportunities to grow into leadership positions.

Insight. Insightful leaders are able to draw unusual connections from their engagement with the community in ways that provide distinct solutions to problems. Internal candidates again have a considerable advantage in having had time to get to know the institution's culture while seeing the challenges it faces. Insight requires time and reflection, and having been a longstanding member of a community contributes to having insight about how the place is functioning.

Interviews should strive to deter-

mine how reflection is part of a candidate's regular work. How do they allow their brains to process? During long walks, yoga or even a commute? How do they seek and obtain honest feedback from others?

Determination. A candidate's vital experiences and accomplish-

“ Institutional administrators should pay more attention to identifying and fostering internal talent by encouraging people who have the desired traits to take on new roles, attend leadership development conferences and read a wide range of books on effective leadership. ”

ments, but rarely does it clarify how goals were accomplished. Solving difficult problems takes time, investment and commitment, and candidates who move from one big position to the next in a few short years simply lack the time to demonstrate the level of determination needed to do difficult jobs. Colleges are long-term endeavors and instantiating change takes a lengthy horizon.

A candidate's demonstrated determination predicts their ability to complete goals that may take many years to achieve. In other words, effective administrators ideally have a patient determination combined with a desire to stay at an institution over the long haul to see their goals completed. Asking candidates about a long-term project in which they worked to achieve change amid resistance should also be a standard part of any

executive interview.

Hiram College president Lori Varlotta demonstrates the traits I've outlined in her essay, "Getting Out to Learn What's Going On." She makes the case for scheduling most of her meetings in other people's offices instead of her own, observing that "this roving

leadership brings about personal and institutional benefits alike."

In the article, she exhibits a sense of curiosity and insight through comments such as, "You can hear the darnedest

things when sitting in the lobbies of the admissions, financial aid or athletics offices waiting for the dean, vice president or director with whom you routinely meet." Reviewing a vita and asking the usual questions about experience is insufficient to identify a leader who uses this type of approach to get to know their campus.

Internal candidates are often more likely to possess the five traits I've described and be able to align them with the institution's goals. More important, colleges can identify people with these traits sooner, and then foster and develop them in preparation for future roles at the institution. That will lead to better administrative hires, because -- again in Fernández-Aráoz's words:

"What makes someone successful in a particular role today might not tomorrow if the competitive environ-

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ment shifts, the company's strategy changes, or he or she must collaborate with or manage a different group of colleagues. So the question is not whether your company's employees and leaders have the right skills; it's whether they have the potential to learn new ones."

Beyond this, internal candidates have other advantages, as executive recruiter Lucy Apthorp Leske notes in "Hiding in Plain Sight," such as a faster learning curve, continuity and stability, and cost and time savings if an exter-

nal search is forgone. It is especially notable that institutions often lose well over a year of progress when an administrator leaves and the position isn't filled for months, as is usually the case for deans, provosts and presidents.

Institutional administrators should pay more attention to identifying and fostering internal talent by encouraging people who have the desired traits to take on new roles, attend leadership development conferences and read a wide range of books on effective lead-

ership. Current leaders must also encourage search committees to think more about potential and less about experience: who the person is matters more than the list of achievements on their vita.

The potential payoff of this perspective is that you will hire more administrators who have the potential to grow and change, understand the history of the place, demonstrate the curiosity and determination to effect change, and are committed over the long term to the good of the institution. ■

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When College Degrees Impede Opportunity

BY FREDERICK M. HESS AND GRANT ADDISON // DECEMBER 10, 2018

College credentialing and degree inflation tend to serve the needs of employers, not students, write Frederick M. Hess and Grant Addison.

Duke University [recently announced](#) that it will no longer ask job applicants about their criminal histories. Duke's move follows the Common Application's [August decision](#) to drop a question inquiring about students' criminal history. For prospective employees and students alike, the push to "ban the box" reflects a healthy desire to strike down barriers that may impede social mobility. Yet, oft overlooked in all of this, especially within higher education, is the way in which college degrees serve as an *impediment* to opportunity.

Of course, at its best, higher education is a powerful engine of opportunity and socioeconomic advancement. And that's the way it's almost universally described. Nevertheless, for too many Americans, the truth is that postsecondary education is principally a toll: an ever-more expensive, two-, four- or (let's be honest) six-year pit stop to employment that is increasingly mandated, gratuitously, by employers' HR departments.



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Today, thousands of employers routinely use college degrees as a convenient way to screen and hire job applicants, even when postsecondary credentials bear no obvious connection to job duties or performance. In a comprehensive report last year, researchers from Harvard Business School documented increasing "[degree inflation](#)" -- as employers demand baccalaureate degrees for middle-skill jobs that don't obviously require one.

The researchers estimated that this phenomenon encompassed more than six million jobs across dozens of industries. In fact, nearly two-thirds of employers surveyed admitted to having rejected applicants with the requisite skills and experience *simply* because they lacked a college degree.

Degree requirements are proliferating absent evidence they correlate with job necessity -- and, indeed, despite some evidence to the contrary. A 2014

survey conducted by Burning Glass Technologies found that employers are [increasingly requiring bachelor's degrees](#) for positions whose current workers don't have one and where the requisite skills haven't changed.

Employer preference for degrees is rising even for entry-level occupations, like IT help-desk technicians, where the job postings do not include skills typically taught at the baccalaureate level, and there is little to no difference in requested skill sets for postings requiring a college degree compared to those that do not.

Now, it's important to clarify that while colleges and universities are the primary beneficiary of degree inflation, much of the responsibility for it lies elsewhere. Instead, this is largely a product of employer convenience and the unintended consequences of federal antidiscrimination law.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibited employers from discriminating against job applicants on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. It did, however, allow employers to use "professionally developed" hiring tests, insofar as they were not "designed, intended or used" to discriminate. In [Griggs v. Duke Power Company \(1971\)](#), the Supreme Court unanimously interpreted this language to mean that when a selection process disproportionately affects

minority groups (e.g. has a "disparate impact"), employers must show that any requirements are directly job related and an accurate predictor of job performance.

This "disparate impact" standard, which Congress [codified in federal law](#), nominally applies to all criteria used in making employment decisions, including educational requirements. Crucially, however, this standard has only been scrupulously applied to *other*, noneducational employment tests. Employers using IQ tests to screen

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) [sued](#) the railroad company CSX Transportation for discrimination, because male job applicants passed the company's physical-fitness tests at a disproportionately higher rate than female applicants. Even though the test was stipulated to be "job related" (since employees were required to lift heavy objects) and "consistent with business necessity," the EEOC *still* required CSX to adopt "alternative practices that have less adverse impact."

College-degree requirements, meanwhile, have escaped scrutiny. In turn, risk-averse employers have become increasingly reliant upon them as an expedient way to screen

“Diplomas are “useful servants,” Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote in *Griggs*, but “they are not to become masters of reality.” Academe should consider its role in permitting diplomas to become the capricious masters of opportunity.”

and hire applicants, for example, must use approved, professionally developed tests and [justify IQ thresholds](#). That is, if companies require job applicants to possess an IQ of 110, they must be able to demonstrate why an applicant with an IQ of 109 is incapable of performing a job that someone with a 110 IQ can.

One need only read that sentence to understand why human-resource lawyers quiver in horror when executives ask about using that kind of screening test.

Even directly applicable employment tests can run afoul of federal regulators. Last year, for instance, the

applicants while avoiding the legal pitfalls accompanying other employment tests.

For employers, the logic is simple: a college degree is an easy-to-read signal that an applicant likely possesses a desirable bundle of behaviors and social capital -- such as the ability to turn in work, sit still for long periods, take direction and so forth -- in addition to confirming the baseline verbal and written skills required for most jobs.

Ironically, indiscriminate degree requirements carry obvious [disparate-impact implications](#), making their casual acceptance all the more re-

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markable. Indeed, the Harvard report [noted](#) that the practice disproportionately harms groups with low college graduation rates, particularly blacks and Hispanics.

The burdens of credential inflation, of course, fall most heavily on those of modest means -- heightening the obstacles for low-income and working-class individuals. Degree requirements summarily disqualify noncredentialed workers with relevant skills and experience from attractive jobs. They bar young people from taking entry-level jobs and building the expertise and abilities that open up new opportunities. And they hold families

and would-be workers hostage, forcing them to devote time and money toward degree collecting, whether or not those credentials actually convey much in the way of relevant skills or knowledge.

Those intent on ensuring that higher education is more of an engine of individual opportunity than a security blanket for businesses would do well to consider the part colleges play, however passively, in all of this. What might be done?

Well, in postsecondary education, there is an overdue opportunity to develop alternative credentialing models and devise new ways to credibly cer-

tify aptitudes and skills. Most important, there's a need to ask where and how institutions may be complicit in enabling statutory and legal practices that compel students to unnecessarily enter college -- not because they want or need the things a college degree represents, but because they fear being denied good jobs based on their failure to buy a piece of paper.

Diplomas are "useful servants," Chief Justice Warren Burger wrote in *Griggs*, but "they are not to become masters of reality." Academe should consider its role in permitting diplomas to become the capricious masters of opportunity. ■

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Our first step in this process was to conduct an informal needs assessment about how faculty and staff members in our college were doing in the area of self-care. Independent conversations with different individuals suggested that, although most of them enjoyed their work, they often experienced stress and burnout on the job as a result of a heavy workload.

Our second step was to research successful self-care programs at colleges and universities throughout the United States. We discovered that engagement in self-care was highest when faculty and staff members themselves chose the activities and those programs were offered at convenient times and locations. Based on those findings and organizational change theory, we crafted the following operational definition for self-care: "taking responsibility for oneself to maintain a healthy and balanced lifestyle at work and in one's personal world through individually determined, proactive activities."

Using that definition, we then surveyed faculty and staff members about their self-care preferences and willingness to participate in any self-care programs. We analyzed the data to determine their preferences when it came to the number and type of activities, as well as the locations and times such activities were offered. Preferred activities included mindfulness meditation, nutrition and health, light exercise and walking, and beginning yoga.

Based on those preferences, we launched a self-care pilot program in spring 2015, offering activities around noon or in the early afternoon in the

education building. Volunteer faculty and staff members served as activity guides. We shared information about those various activities via email blasts and on our [website](#). The program was informally named Self-Care for U at Northridge, or the SUN Program.

Program evaluation results showed that 44 percent of full-time faculty and staff members initially participated. More important, we saw significant positive changes in participants' engagement in self-care activities and in their sense of calm and well-being. Faculty and staff members said they valued the opportunity to gain helpful information about various types of self-care and to engage in these activities together within a supportive community. They liked the short time frame of the self-care sessions, the freedom to choose which sessions to attend and the ease in learning from the well-prepared guides. They also indicated that they wanted the self-care activities to continue in future semesters.

Their responses suggested a real shift in the culture and values around the importance of taking care of oneself. The self-care program appeared to be a pipeline for faculty and staff members to engage in other self-care activities on the campus and in the community.

More than half of the participants indicated that they were motivated to exercise more, eat better, get a regular health checkup and participate in other mindfulness and yoga activities. In addition, they reported a number of unexpected positive developments, including the formation of a university-

wide mindfulness affinity group. Several guides also enrolled in additional self-care training, and other campus colleges started using our self-care program as a model for developing their own programs.

Based on feedback from surveys and focus-group interviews, we adjusted the times and types of activities and added new ones, including talks on sustainability, gardening, holistic health, and self-care and the arts. We continue to collaborate with various groups on our campus and to have discussions with representatives from other colleges about self-care programming.

In fact, as the program has evolved, we have become increasingly aware that a shared effort among faculty members and human resources and other administrators has been vital to its success. We have also recognized that the greatest challenge to our work has been promoting a cultural change within the college organizational framework and among the people who work there.

Now, in our third year, we are pleased to report that more than 60 percent of full-time faculty and staff members in the college are attending at least one self-care session. Through recent surveys and focus-group interviews, faculty and staff members have also told us that they engage in talk about self-care with colleagues and students more often after attending SUN Program activities and are now even integrating self-care information and activities into their classes and lessons. This highlights the expanding effect of a new self-care perspective and how it

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can create the cultural change within the entire college community that has been our ultimate goal.

If you are considering whether or not to implement a similar program at your institution, we recommend that the program design adhere to the following foundational guidelines:

- positive communication in a safe work environment;
- equal input among all stakeholders;
- voluntary faculty and staff participation;
- leadership by a committed facilitator-coordinator with gradual transfer to others; and
- ongoing evaluation, reflection and revision.

We also realized that commitment and support from top administrators was imperative for achieving signifi-

cant, positive changes in participants' engagement in self-care activities and in their sense of calm and well-being, as well as bringing about many unanticipated, positive campuswide changes and beyond. Administrative buy-in should be demonstrated in a number of ways.

As gatekeepers of university resources, administrators must provide support, such as facility availability and activity times during the workday for self-care involvement, with the knowledge that the return on the investment is well worth it. Administrators must also actively publicize their encouragement of self-care activities as a way of promoting involvement. Finally, administrators should engage in university self-care activities themselves to set an example that taking care of oneself in the work setting is a

priority.

Once you start your program, you should encourage continuing input from participants and others about what works and what should change to meet their interests and needs. And, finally, the program must be institutionalized to ensure its sustainability. You can achieve such durability by making it part of an existing center or institute. By investing in faculty and staff members' self-care, your institution will ultimately reap the benefits of highly engaged employees. Based on well-being research and our program findings, we posit that establishing faculty and staff self-care programs will promote high morale, facilitate student success, inspire innovative research and offer valuable role models for others in higher education settings. ■

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<https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2017/08/18/value-self-care-programs-campuses-essay>

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