

Continuing Trends or Future Transformations?

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By the 1990s, as we know too well, the trends discussed throughout this volume had contributed to public pronouncements of a "crisis" in higher education. Calls proliferated for faculty to spend more time in the classroom and for more undergraduate classes to be taught by senior faculty. Quality teaching was a central concern for parents, students, trustees, state legislators, journalistic critics, administrators, and indeed faculty members themselves as they talked and wrote about this crisis. That it was perhaps *the* basic issue was obscured, however, by the rise of a politically charged debate over "political correctness" (PC) and academic freedom. That is, a public rightly concerned about the quality of education provided by America's colleges and universities was told wrongly by many commentators to look for the sources of the problem in the ideologies of professors and not in the social organization of higher education. Accusations about "tenured radicals" (which were, for the most part, poorly supported by the evidence) distracted attention from much more basic questions about whether professors—including tenured ones—taught well, taught enough, and taught the right students. One reason was that the critical discussion focused almost entirely on what went on in the most elite and selective schools (the ones in which "liberal arts" predominated). Fights

over the place of Shakespeare in the canon, or of world cultures versus Western civilization, had much more to do with Stanford University and the Ivy League than with community colleges and four-year schools dominated by applied majors. This was so precisely because the dispute was largely, if not explicitly, about how to construct and certify an elite. Certainly, other sorts of institutions have experienced the effects and the intellectual changes, if fewer of the rancorous quarrels.

As often happens, the argument became most heated shortly before social changes would render it obsolete. It was never the case (even in sociology, one of the fields most stereotyped as left wing) that there was any preponderance of "tenured radicals." By the time the anti-PC argument found its full voice, conservatism was gaining ground in much of the academy. Perhaps more important, a long-standing glut of Ph.D. holders was beginning to turn to shortage. The shortage so far has been very selective; the job market has opened up dramatically, but there still is a backlog of the underemployed, and the demand is greatest in certain subfields and at certain sorts of institutions (reflecting the general trends discussed in Part I of this volume). The earlier glut had left academics on the defensive when faced with an onslaught of criticism, demands that senior fac-

ulty teach more beginning courses, questions about the role of research, and other challenges. The growing scarcity of faculty, combined with a highly unequal "star" system, mitigates against this. But never mind; the argument will recur, as it has for more than 100 years. It is endemic to the basic structural differentiation and ambiguity of mission that characterizes American higher education. The specifics continue to shift, but neither characteristic is likely to disappear any time soon.

So what is likely to happen? With apologies for the sketchy character of what follows, here are some likely possibilities.

1. *The currently strong job market will temporarily—but only temporarily—reduce calls for an end to tenure.* These have flourished recently not only because conservatives thought tenure was protecting left-wing opinions, foolish PC, or the replacement of classics by cultural studies but also because the abolition of a mandatory retirement age allowed many senior professors to continue to hold positions while talented younger scholars were denied them. The relative ease of gaining tenure during the rapid expansion of the 1960s and early 1970s exacerbated the problem by leaving in place an unusually large number of tenured scholars, many of whom had been chosen with relatively low selectivity. These scholars constituted a kind of demographic bulge, blocking job opportunities and mobility for the large cohorts of talented graduate students attracted to fields such as sociology in the 1960s and 1970s. A downturn in employment opportunities exacerbated this, turning many of the newer Ph.D.'s into a kind of enduring academic underclass. Members of this generation who considered themselves underplaced have constituted competition for new Ph.D.'s for 20 years. In the same period, simple financial pressures encouraged challenges to tenure at many institutions

(famously Bennington College in 1994).¹ Calls to rethink tenure also flourished because of the extraordinary freedom and opportunities for self-regulation afforded academics, at least those with tenure in relatively elite schools. It was (and remains) easy to find examples of scholars who do little teaching, no research, and much gardening—even while studies show that, overall, academics work quite long hours. Colleges and universities added to the problem both by offering the public extremely poor explanations of what professors do and by failing to implement effective systems of post-tenure review and continual performance monitoring.

Elite academics have worn blinders in considering the issue of tenure. Many have relied on the crutch of arguments about academic freedom that are both self-interested and (often) irrelevant. Keeping protections against dismissal for unpopular political views seems important. So does (but with more qualifications) protecting against dismissals that reflect short-term fluctuations in the popularity of different scholarly fields. Both of these can be addressed through good labor law, due process, and other institutional mechanisms as well as tenure. Moreover, simply citing academic freedom as the basis for protecting tenure ignores the transformations that have changed the professorate since that argument was developed.² First, compared to the earlier institutions in which the academic freedom argument was classically developed, today's American colleges and universities pioneered a less hierarchical structure of ranks (but not salaries) in which the range of protected "professors" was expanded to include a majority of teachers. Second, the growth and differentiation in American higher education discussed heretofore meant that most faculty protected by tenure worked outside the elite institutions committed to the production and transmission of original

knowledge and perspectives. Third, at least between the late 1970s and mid-1990s, tenure may have worked to inhibit free speech and intellectual diversity. It did this both by reducing the number of positions available for younger scholars and by holding the younger faculty lucky enough to get tenure-track positions in an extended purgatory subject to intense scrutiny and review with ever elevated standards. These standards tended toward the production of a high volume of relatively routine publications rather than toward the encouragement of radical differences from established views of the senior faculty. Fourth, and following from the same demography, in this period tenure became manifestly a system privileging an older professorate against younger would-be entrants. This older professorate was disproportionately white and male, which meant not only that it was harder for minorities and women to get in but also that when affirmative action measures were used, they were more likely to provoke resentment because competition was limited to a reduced range of openings.³

The current relative shortage of faculty probably will continue for several years, at least so long as the economy remains strong. It will mitigate inflation of standards. But it will not change the fundamentals. If anything, it probably will exacerbate bidding wars over stars (which now operate, to some extent, at all stages of scholarly careers). At the same time, colleges and universities will continue their drives toward increasing productivity and efficiency.⁴ Willingly or under external pressure, more and more will adopt post-tenure reviews, and more of these will come to have real teeth. Which forms of faculty productivity they favor will be a matter of struggle and will vary among institutions. Colleges and universities also will continue to employ large numbers of temporary and adjunct faculty. If anything, the proportion

of faculty in these positions will increase. It is bad faith for those protected by tenure not to recognize that this means that a large percentage of university teachers already work outside the protection or even potential protection of tenure. There will be mounting pressures for colleges and universities to develop better employment practices for these faculty and career paths for non-tenure-track faculty that offer them reasonable, if limited, job security and opportunities for promotion or recognition. In addition, there should be efforts to incorporate these faculty more fully into the intellectual and collegial life of colleges and universities. Indeed, it is arguable that at least those in potentially long-term non-tenure-track positions should be represented in faculty senates and similar institutions of self-governance.

2. Enrollments will remain strong based on demographic momentum but subject to economic cycles; however, there is no reason to expect a return to the growth in resources and enrollments characteristic of the postwar period. Stagnation or retrenchment already have affected institutions differently. This probably will harden distinctions in the kinds of education and teaching and intellectual environments they offer. In particular, less selective schools will be much more dramatically tied to economic factors. This means fluctuating enrollments (an incentive for administrators to continue to rely on temporary faculty). It also means that the shift toward courses sold on the basis of their job market advantages will not be reversed (as some liberal arts advocates fondly hope). If anything, job-related courses will become more clearly the staple offerings of most nonselective or minimally selective schools. Thus, the distinction between sociology set in predominantly liberal arts settings and sociology set in more applied contexts is likely to continue to grow. In the absence of major intel-

lectual changes producing an increased theoretical unification of the field, this is likely to mean differences not only in practical dimensions of teaching but in what is actually taught. It will be the basis for continuing splits within the field. An increase in adult students will bring some seeking liberal arts courses as "life enrichment" but more seeking retraining to compete in the job market.

Enrollments in predominantly liberal arts schools will be likely to remain approximately constant. The good news for advocates of the kinds of education they offer is that these schools are more shielded from economic pressures (directly on them and indirectly on students' choice of fields). The bad news (for those same advocates) is that outside those schools, liberal arts teaching probably will shrink and applied teaching probably will grow. To understand this, we should set it in the context of recent shifts in fields of study.

Analysts have noted three important flaws in many accounts of decline in the liberal arts (Turner and Bowen 1990; Oakley 1992). First, partly because of the conservative cultural agenda of many authors, these are commonly written as though the heart of the matter is a decline in the humanities. In fact, the issue is better understood as a decline in numbers of students pursuing liberal arts degrees; indeed, the natural sciences and, to a lesser extent, the social sciences also have given way to other choices of majors. Second, the location of transformation during and after the late 1960s has led commentators to exaggerate political and content dimensions and to fail to grasp a key underlying dynamic. There was a dramatic growth in arts and sciences majors in the years of university expansion. Curricula at new schools largely mirrored those at older ones. Expanding campuses attempted to upgrade their statuses by upgrading the place of arts and sciences in their curricula. The increase was

short-lived, however. Turner and Bowen (1990) cite Ball State University as an example. There arts and sciences degrees grew from 2.5 percent of the total in 1954 to 29.9 percent in 1970, before failing back to 13.3 percent in 1986. Third, commentators have missed a crucial difference between male and female enrollment patterns. Male enrollment in the humanities, for example, had already declined dramatically before the 1960s. This did not translate into significant effects on aggregate course enrollments because women were entering colleges and universities in growing numbers and disproportionately choosing humanities courses. Women's choices of majors began to shift away from the humanities later than did men's; in the 1970s and 1980s, women moved out of the humanities in a trend similar to that of men a generation earlier. This occurred largely because many professional careers became increasingly open to women, and women began to place more emphasis on preparation for employment. It resulted, however, in a specious conclusion about the "crisis of the humanities."

3. The increasing inequalities of American society will bring further differentiation within higher education as well as between those who attend college and those who do not; these will have direct implications for how sociology is taught. How any individual school pursues its educational mission and what it is able to offer its students is shaped not only by internal policy decisions but also by its position in the larger field of higher education.

Already, competition to attend highly selective schools is intense and has increased compared to that a few years ago. This represents, in part, an accurate recognition on the part of parents and students that elite degrees pay off substantially more than do nonelite degrees. At the same time, schools struggle with each other, not only to attract numbers of students but also,

in the case of the more selective schools, to attract the best students. If schools are not able to maintain a high level of selectivity, then they become vulnerable to loss of their elite status, devaluation of their degrees, increasing price competition, commoditization of faculty work, and other potential transformations. Many will cease to be centered on the arts and sciences. Although private schools figure prominently in this top rung of American higher education, so do some public universities and colleges. These include both the most selective research universities and the increasingly prominent publicly funded liberal arts colleges. The latter sometimes are designated "honors colleges" of their state systems (e.g., College of New Jersey, New College of the University of South Florida).

4. *Growth in graduate education is likely to continue, with implications for the place of undergraduate teaching in the overall professorate.* The growing prevalence of postbaccalaureate degrees is as dramatic a development of the postwar years as the internal differentiation of undergraduate institutions and curricula. The majority of graduates of highly selective liberal arts colleges and universities now go on to graduate or professional school, and there is every reason to expect that growth to continue. Grumbling about it—and its consequences—also is likely to continue. Nonetheless, graduate education has emerged as just as much a normal stage of personal development today as undergraduate education was in the prewar period.

It is undergraduate education that defines the American public conception of both college and university. In the case of universities, however, graduate students are at least as basic to the character of campus life. Graduate education is, however, poorly understood. In particular, there is little appreciation of why majors in arts and science subjects are not more closely

tied to employment, leaving many students to seek either professional credentials or more advanced academic study in a research and/or scholarly field. This might reflect credentialism, but I do not think it reflects only that. There also have been genuine increases in knowledge and in the skill bases for many lines of work. Much of the confusion has to do with the more general pattern of institutional differentiation that leaves schools pursuing different educational mandates under the common names "college" and "university."

Growth in graduate education is an important strategy for institutional reputation building, although it works differently at different levels of the status hierarchy. Whereas adding a master's program or two would do little to enhance the standing of the most elite and selective liberal arts colleges, it is a productive investment for many schools in which applied majors dominate. The basic distinction lies between high-status professional fields in which professional degrees are exclusively or primarily postgraduate and lower status fields in which undergraduate credentials predominate (or in which college degrees are not yet required). The elite liberal arts colleges offer relatively general educations that prepare students for specialization in high-status professional schools or Ph.D. programs (or for jobs that do not require highly specialized training or credentials but that reward general learning, social status, and/or networks). By contrast, less selective or nonselective schools emphasize applied programs at the bachelor's level (although, of course, they also may, in varying proportions, offer "arts and science" degrees, the holders of which may seek entrance to elite professional or graduate schools). Some fields—notably business—straddle the distinction. By and large, the more elite and selective business schools avoid undergraduate instruction, and those on the way up have incentives to minimize their work with

undergraduates. This leaves the field of undergraduate studies in business largely open to less selective schools. The latter, in turn, have an incentive to develop graduate programs. This not only serves faculty interests but also might make undergraduate degrees more valuable and help to recruit students. The presence of a graduate program enables the school to develop better connections to employers and makes it more likely that those who receive bachelor's degrees will be able to claim a connection to people placed higher in the administrative hierarchies of prospective and actual employers.

In the professional fields where undergraduate credentials remain prominent, there is apt to be a growing differentiation among practitioners that correlates with a growing role for graduate degrees. Development of graduate nursing programs, for example, reflects the expansion of nursing into new domains (e.g., clinical assessments for schools or courts), the growing proportion of nurses who work in large institutional settings rather than small clinics or patients' homes, and the introduction of increased managerial and planning responsibility in the context of a changing health care system. A number of sociologists teach in nursing programs (and/or those programs require sociology courses). This might be only a transitional pattern, however, because there is a tendency for each field to seek to educate its own future faculty members. Hence, holders of doctorates in nursing who have specialized in research on social dimensions of the field may increasingly replace sociologists on nursing faculties.

This is not the place to take on the larger questions about the nature of graduate education (as distinct from professional programs). I simply want to make five more specific points.

First, graduate education is not growing at the expense of undergraduate education.⁵ The two can flourish together. It is true that small

colleges offer undergraduates a level and kind of contact with faculty members that large universities seldom can match. This is partly because of the presence of graduate students but more so because of the numbers of undergraduates and the different expectations for research productivity. In addition, such a view fails to take seriously the contributions of graduate students as teachers. It is not a failing for research universities to put graduate students into the classroom if they are advanced students and are well trained and appropriately monitored. On the contrary, it provides some of the continual infusion of new ideas and diverse perspectives that is one of the distinctive advantages of attending a research university. This is less apparent partly because of the way in which graduate student teachers are commonly used. They often are misleadingly called teaching assistants even when they have full course responsibility. They also typically are assigned to teach the broadest and most basic courses (e.g., introductory sociology). These courses are, in fact, among the most difficult to teach well and are among the courses in which years of experience (combined with continued effort) pay off well. These also are courses in which graduate students have the least chance to offer their special advantage as teachers—exposure for undergraduates to active, vital, engagement in research. It would make more sense for many graduate students to be assigned to teach in their areas of research specialization, where they know the literature well and can bring some of the excitement of their own research to their undergraduate students.

Second, the institutional setting of graduate education matters. Just as undergraduate education is very different in a residential liberal arts college, a research university, or a four-year commuter campus, so too does the experience and, to some extent, the intellectual content of graduate education vary with context. I already

have mentioned the advantages any one graduate program draws from being embedded within a graduate school offering a panoply of such programs. These advantages are centrally intellectual but also extend outside the curricula. Graduate students benefit from the presence of, and opportunity to interact with, other graduate students and from specialized support services that are available only where there is a critical mass to use them (e.g., special language programs, centers for development of teaching).

Third, work with graduate students also is teaching and deserves attention as an important part of teaching. Graduate students are, after all, not different people but unusually talented and serious former undergraduate students. Courses and seminars for them may be taught better or worse. Advising and mentoring can be strong and enriching or minimal. They may have opportunities for research apprenticeships or lack them. Professors (and programs) may create settings in which groups of graduate students with similar interests learn from each other over extended periods of time or leave each graduate student in relative isolation. Graduate programs can be well planned, with strong teaching of basic courses such as theory and methods, or collective efforts to ensure the strength of such teaching can be minimal because of notions of professorial privilege. Similarly, there may be a hierarchy of graduate courses in which some cover the range of work in a field, whereas others follow up on specific aspects. Or, all instructors may simply assume the right to teach their own research or their own biases, obliterating the distinction between a more basic course and an idiosyncratic seminar. Not least of all, departments may choose to have graduate students systematically evaluate the instruction they receive—or choose to hide—from the information such evaluations would provide.

Fourth, one of the important tasks of graduate programs is to educate the future professorate. Whereas teaching assistants are widely decried as cheap labor, they also are teachers in training. Failure to make clear the distinction of roles and to make good on the promise of really providing training for teaching puts many American universities in a difficult situation. It is not surprising that teaching assistants have begun to form unions. Viewed simply from their contributions of labor power, they are indeed paid low salaries and subjected to exploitation. It is not at all uncommon for students to be paid 20 percent of what senior faculty members are paid to take on at least superficially similar responsibilities. The problem is more complex than this account would make it seem. In principle, faculty members also take on many other responsibilities including supervision of graduate students, undergraduate advising, and participation in collegial duties and administration—not to mention research. Most faculty members spend many working hours on these tasks. But, and here is a key feature of the problem, institutions generally apply few, if any, negative incentives to those who fail to perform these roles. Faculty who do not advise undergraduates, mentor graduate students, serve on committees, take on administrative tasks, or publish research might not receive raises, but they are not fired or subjected to loss of income. Indeed, doing all these things badly (except perhaps research) works surprisingly well as a way in which to gain free time within the context of university employment.

Fifth, the majority of graduate students, including Ph.D. holders, will not become college teachers. In thinking about how we teach at the graduate level, it is vital to pay attention to the multiple career tracks for which we prepare students. As with so much else, this is likely to be reflected in a differentiation of

institutional roles. Educating students as researchers is likely to remain the dominant strategy for those who wish to be among the most elite Ph.D. programs. Expansion into applied research might grow, but expansion into nonresearch fields (e.g., marriage and family counseling) is likely to be rare. The elite graduate departments would do well to think explicitly about how they can best prepare students for jobs in selective liberal arts colleges, where research continues to flourish alongside a strong emphasis on undergraduate teaching. Development of applied programs outside the research emphasis may take place more at other universities and may offer them distinctive niches. In all settings, it is important to keep in mind that graduate education is, at least ideally, not simply “training” but a much broader intellectual and scholarly enterprise. Students are not simply developing technical skills; this may be more or less important depending on their career aspirations. They are continuing an education. If this works well, then they may become business executives, journalists, politicians, or even college administrators but still remain, in important ways, sociologists.

5. The internationalization of American higher education will continue and will pose both opportunities and challenges. There might be debate about how to understand increasing global integration, but there can be little doubt that it is a basic fact of life in the contemporary world. Barring the catastrophic scenarios of science fiction novels, there is good reason to think that global integration will continue to grow in the next century as it has grown in the past five centuries. This holds direct implications for the teaching of sociology.

First, of course, there is a challenge to the actual substantive content we teach. For example, American sociology is struggling to break free from constraints that have impaired its

otherwise great ability to speak to the processes and concerns of globalization. A simple ethnocentrism is the first. The vast majority of American sociological research has been about America (even if often presented as discoveries of universal truth). In introductory textbooks, “cross-cultural” examples have been commonly drawn from older anthropological studies of “exotic” or “primitive” peoples, not from contemporary social contexts other than America. The recent growth of international research is a welcome countertrend; so is the growing introduction of sociological research from other countries into the teaching and scholarship of Americans. In addition to ethnocentrism, there is the extent to which sociology has taken its very notion of society from the rise of the nation-state (Tilly 1984; Calhoun 1995). This has made a taken-for-granted assumption out of a question that needs to be explored, with attention to all the different scales and manners in which collectivities and social relations are constructed. Thus, bringing international content more fully into our teaching is not simply a matter of comparative sociology in which the units of comparison are presumed to be “whole societies,” that is, nation-states. It also is a matter of studying transnational processes—movement of people, flows of culture or capital, corporate organization, and other nongovernmental organizations. Taking internationalization seriously also means seeing the internal heterogeneity of each allegedly “whole” society—cultural diversity, regional distinctions, different forms of ties to other societies around the world, and different relations to the international activities of the government. All of this implies that what is needed is not only more courses on explicitly international topics but also an introduction of more globally diverse content into all sorts of courses.

Beyond the desirability of better scientific content, institutional transformation makes

internationalization an issue for teaching. Close to half a million international students study in U.S. colleges and universities.⁶ This does not include foreign-born residents of the United States, who have become a rapidly growing proportion of the student population. Both groups are distributed unevenly among schools; close to 10 percent of all foreign students attend colleges and universities in metropolitan New York. In general, foreign students are more prominent at schools in large metropolitan areas but attend a wide variety of kinds of schools in those areas. Courses need to change not only to better educate these students but also to better take advantage of the diversity their presence brings to classrooms. Much of the growth in international students has been in graduate students, and of course, this also calls for attention. Too many programs have been slow to meet the interests of the students they attract; too many treat international students as a separate category, subject to different expectations and monitored for signs as to whether they will return to their home countries after graduation or make careers in the United States. Many do the latter, of course, and contribute to a growing presence of international faculty in American colleges and universities. This too is a transformation with implications for teaching. These faculty have much to contribute, but both employing schools and students are ambivalent about them (e.g., quick to criticize accents).

The flow of students in the other direction also is important. Some 89,000 American students studied abroad in 1995-1996. Study abroad programs, however, are prominent only among students at the more selective colleges and universities. This is partly a reflection of students' aspirations and choice of courses of study, but it also is largely shaped by financial resources.⁷ This suggests all the more need to bring international content into a wide range of

teaching. Study abroad is growing and increasingly being encouraged in liberal arts programs (and in a few more applied programs, mainly at selective schools). A weak link, however, is the development of opportunities for returning study abroad students to integrate their international experiences into their curricula, to reflect on what they learned and see it in intellectually deeper ways. Students evaluate study abroad experiences extremely favorably, but except for language majors, these remain largely cut off from the rest of what they do in school, and "reentry" sometimes is a letdown.

6. *Student populations will continue to grow more diverse.* As college and university education has become less exclusively the prerogative of an elite, as women have been included in growing numbers, and as religious and racial exclusions have been eliminated, student bodies have become more heterogeneous. This has been true on nearly every campus, but diversity also has been unevenly distributed among campuses. The changes reflect not only higher education policies but changes in the demography and stratification of American society.

Increasing enrollments of students outside dominant groups has brought recurrent resentments, regardless of whether the newly admitted or expanding groups were Jews, Blacks, Asians, or women. The affirmative action policies adopted in and after the 1960s have produced especially widespread resentment and criticism including from some of their intended (and actual) beneficiaries. In the late 1990s, attacks on such programs began to enjoy more success in courts and referenda. It seems likely that the extent of affirmative action in college and university admissions will be reduced. Certainly in some states such as California, dramatic changes in policy have been adopted. But it is not likely that there will be an even rollback

to such programs; rather, the level of effort made to attract various minorities will likely vary from school to school and from state to state.

Cutbacks in affirmative action will most adversely affect blacks and Hispanics. They will benefit whites and Asians, and in states with large Asian populations, they will benefit Asians the most.⁸ The main impact will be not on the overall numbers of each group attending college but rather on which colleges they attend. Where affirmative action is relaxed, the most selective schools will become more white and Asian, the less selective more black and Hispanic. The impact probably will be greater on public schools than on private ones. The impact is likely to be more extreme in some states such as California. In general, it will work to increase the implications of the differentiation of institutions we already have noted.

Whatever happens with affirmative action, however, diversity is likely to grow—and to grow even at highly selective schools. High levels of immigration in the past decade are a key reason and are reinforced by the relatively young ages of most immigrants and the relatively high fertility of immigrants (and nonimmigrant minorities). Teachers will need to be attentive to the different backgrounds and interests of a much wider range of groups than were present in American higher education even a couple of decades ago. Already, teachers in major metropolitan areas are dealing with such changes in student bodies. Recent immigrants figure especially prominently in community colleges and some public four-year schools. These are attractive not only because of low cost and open admissions but also because of programs that meet these students' needs and convenience for living at home (which many such students and/or their families prefer). Wherever minority students are, there also will

be demand for teaching that bears directly on the distinctiveness of their lives and communities.⁹

The goal of having faculty populations broadly reflecting the composition of student bodies is becoming even harder to attain. This is likely to be a source of continuing controversy. The problem is not that there are few talented members of minority groups but that there are many such minority groups. Asian students might think it a good thing to have black and Hispanic as well as white faculty, for example, but it hardly overcomes a lack of Asian faculty. South Asian students might feel poorly represented by Chinese faculty members, although both are "Asian." Pakistani and Indian students might not feel equally well represented by faculty of either national background—and, as the example suggests, religion is likely to play a role (uncomfortable for many American sociologists) alongside race, language, and national origin. Many of these also are categories of potential faculty that current department members, even those favorable to affirmative action for blacks, have a hard time conceptualizing as important for increasing diversity and representativeness. To this, add the question of whether women of ethnic and racial minorities are hired as often as men. In any case, more different minority group members will compete (with each other as well as with whites) for open positions. Foreign students figure in some groups, such as Asians, alongside immigrant or longtime Americans. Many such groups are coming to be prominent in graduate student populations while still poorly represented in faculty positions.

To the extent that departments successfully recruit a range of minority faculty, they will have to pay attention to the shortage of co-ethnic senior mentors for these new junior faculty. They also will need to deal well with

situations in which senior faculty are overwhelmingly white and junior faculty are overwhelmingly people of color. Recruiting diverse junior faculty is, after all, only one step in a longer process of adjusting to change. Not least of all, senior faculty will need to be prepared to work with students of various ethnicities, including white and black Americans, to minimize their prejudices against members of other groups, for example, Asians with strong accents.

7. *Within colleges and universities, there will be opportunities to achieve stronger intellectual communities across disciplinary divisions, but there also will be resistance.* One of the great changes in higher education institutions has been a reduction in the embeddedness and membership of each individual faculty member in his or her home institution. This has come partly as a result of growth in scale. It has come largely as a result of interinstitutional mobility. As faculty move from school to school, they have reduced cross-unit ties within each school. A crucial dimension of all of this is the development of highly distinct academic disciplines. This is not just—or perhaps even crucially—a matter of intellectual distinctions (Calhoun 1992). It is a matter of power and turf control. It also is largely a matter of the creation of sociometric universes within which reputations and careers are formed.

Different disciplines are supported by separate professional associations, scholarly journals, and periodic conventions. There also are interdisciplinary associations, journals, and conventions. These typically play smaller roles in job markets, but they are not altogether different. As we discussed earlier, the rising importance of research facilitated the creation of supralocal job markets and career opportunities. These are of greatest importance, not

surprisingly, for those scholars and institutions that most emphasize research. The more invested academics are in research, the greater their opportunities for mobility and the more differentiated their career patterns are likely to be. At the same time, the proliferation of temporary faculty also works against the construction of strong intellectual community.

Among the impacts of this pattern is a strong compartmentalization of intellectual life. Not only is each discipline an intellectual in-group suspicious of outsiders, so are many subdisciplines. The jokes about scholars knowing more and more about less and less have bite. Specialization is a path to certain forms of success. It is, however, a path antithetical to strong local intellectual community. It also encourages a differentiation, and sometimes even an alienation (of teaching scholars, especially those focused mainly on undergraduates), from those playing the most powerful roles in the elite research institutions.

Continuing reductions in research funding, especially government support for scholar-initiated “basic science,” will narrow the range of schools and the range of scholars who can depend heavily on this kind of research. Most other schools and scholars will have greater reasons to strengthen their local ties. Proprietary research has grown rapidly, although only minimally in sociology. Where this is rooted in local university-industry connections rather than in the discrete funding of individual scholars’ research, this enhances local ties. Growth in applied research also furthers local ties and frequently is less closely controlled by disciplinary concerns than is basic science. Last, but not least, as government funding is cut and tied to special programs, foundations play a larger role. These, however, seldom are set up on disciplinary bases and commonly set up their programs on the basis of cross-cutting thematic

concerns. Ease of long-distance communication (e.g., by e-mail and the Internet) also facilitates formation of cross-disciplinary subgroups. As more graduate students seek employment outside universities, the hold of disciplines on them (and thus on those who pay for their education and employ their teachers) may be reduced. Two-career couples have become more prominent, and geographic mobility is harder for them.

Among the implications of low levels of local interdisciplinary ties is a tendency for teachers in any one field to know relatively little about what their students are studying in other departments. A valid but not altogether novel criticism of contemporary college education is that there is little coherence to the overall package of courses a student takes and that there are few opportunities for students to reflect on how the whole fits together. Instructors who have weak knowledge of and ties to colleagues in other fields are poorly placed to help students make the relevant connections. Colleges and universities recently have responded to this line of criticism with a renewed emphasis on interdisciplinary general education at the “foundations” level and on “capstone” courses, usually within majors, at the immediate pre-graduation stage. The latter have commonly been disciplinary and often oriented especially toward students continuing toward disciplinary graduate programs. Some, however, have addressed the needs of students headed toward postbaccalaureate professional schools or making the transition from college to employment. There remains, however, a tension between the strong interdisciplinary interests of many students and the extent to which disciplines continue to control the turf of academic employment.

Intense competition over research stars on the part of elite graduate institutions is likely to continue. This will lead to more interinstitutional mobility and reductions in local integra-

tion across disciplines in those institutions. The more open the job market, the greater will be the reward attaching to disciplinary prestige compared to local cross-unit ties. On the other hand, many stars are hired on the basis of interdisciplinary reputations and engagements. In many universities, moreover, disciplinary departments are the primary defenders of the status quo. Conservative against most forms of change (except growth in their own resources), they resist curricular reform, the introduction of new fields, and investment in interdisciplinary scholarship and teaching, even when these are intellectually exciting and/or attractive to students.

It is at least possible that the hold of discrete disciplines over academic employment and other resources will be attenuated. This is perhaps least likely in the largest research universities. But if interdisciplinary education becomes more attractive to potential employers, then there will be some incentive for graduate schools to provide it. This coincides with a strong set of intellectual challenges to disciplines. Sociology, for example, has relatively weak internal coherence, and this is closely related to an intellectual diversity and openness that many of us find among its principal attractions. But this also limits the hold of any putative center on a wide range of nominal members of the discipline. Excitement in interdisciplinary fields from social history to cultural studies, science studies, and the intersecting worlds of theory is palpable. Both research funding and employment opportunities for students draw other sociologists toward criminology, medical sociology, family studies, and other more “applied” fields. This seems likely to continue, along with disciplinary resistance and varying levels of accommodation.

Changes continue. Some are welcome, like the current opening up of the job market. Even such welcome changes demand action as it be-

comes crucial to attract talented students, especially minority students, to graduate education and teaching careers. We must be careful not to vocalize excessively the frustrations and cynicism forged in years when there were virtually no jobs in this changed era. At the same time, even the opening up of the job market has different implications for different sorts of institutions. It does not come with a simple elimination of fiscal stringency, for example, and it does not erase the enormous movement toward temporary employment that has deeply affected academic careers and intellectual life in recent years. There also is more and more attractive nonacademic employment for graduate students. But both this and the effective education of future college teachers call for deeper examination of graduate curricula—beyond the goal of training researchers—and for a recognition that graduate teaching is an increasingly important kind of teaching (not something else that some undergraduate teachers happen to do).

A major concern is the extent to which institutional differentiation is giving way to polarization. For schools heavily invested in liberal arts education, the most basic issue is whether they are able to attract more qualified applicants than they can accept. This means paying the bills without growing beyond the high-level applicant pool (and, in most cases, maintaining both diversity and intellectual quality by providing scholarships for a sizable number of students). Being able to keep undergraduate programs focused on the arts and sciences also means securing graduate or professional school placement for most graduates and offering sufficient general prestige to help others without job-specific credentials in the market for middle-class jobs. Schools that cannot meet these requirements will be pressed to focus increasingly on applied subjects and direct ties to labor markets and will face different competitive and fiscal pressures.¹⁰

For all the criticisms of American colleges and universities that have been offered in recent years, it is important to keep in mind that we offer higher education to an unprecedented proportion of our population. We welcome international students in large numbers and attract them partly because of the quality of our schools. There is much to be proud of. This has made it all the more frustrating when critics—insiders as well as outsiders—have claimed that teaching was being utterly neglected or ideologically subverted. Equally frustrating, our leaders in higher education have done a strikingly poor job in explaining colleges, universities, the work of their faculties, and the education of their students to the public and to interested groups such as parents and, indeed, students themselves. Reporters might understand us poorly, but because they are our graduates and the readers of our press releases, we should not simply blame them for this.

It has been harder to develop strong approaches to the teaching of sociology when these are pursued without attention to the differentiation of students and institutions. To measure up to the tasks of educational excellence before us, we need to be clear-sighted about the transformations we have experienced and those we still are working through.

Notes

1. Larger institutions were not immune. Under financial pressure in 1991, the University of California introduced not only economic incentives for retirement but also procedures that could lead to termination of tenure for low-productivity faculty who did not volunteer. See Brubacher and Rudy (1997:402-4).

2. O'Brien (1997) offers a useful discussion of some of the background and arguments, and he concludes that tenure is not a necessary condition of academic freedom.

3. One of the continuing obstacles to appointing more minority faculty, at least in the research universities, is that their records are compared primarily to their age mates. The inflation of publication standards in an era of few jobs makes this a tough comparison. But hardly anyone is willing to admit the extent to which many minorities denied jobs because their research records were not "up to par" in fact have stronger records than already tenured faculty.

4. Institutions will continue to experience fiscal pressures, even in good economic times. Many of the factors that already have driven up costs will continue to do so. These include not only labor costs but also expenditures on libraries, physical plant, and laboratory facilities (for teaching as well as research). At the same time, competition for students will center partly on cost (in the form of scholarships at elite institutions and directly in the form of tuition and fees at less elite ones).

5. One would generally not say that college education has grown at the expense of high school. There might be at least one grain of truth in such a statement, however, as in the notion that graduate education has in some way sapped undergraduate education. In our very hierarchical educational field, prestige and material rewards typically are greater at higher levels. This will tend to draw strong teachers away from lower levels of the system. The fact remains, in the case of high school as in that of college, that the biggest change in character of education has had to do with extension of entrance to a much larger percentage of the population.

6. The total was 457,984 in 1996-1997, according the Institute for International Education. This is an increase of about 1 percent over the year before. The most rapid growth in numbers of foreign students took place in the 1980s. The recent crisis of Asian economies

might actually reduce the numbers, but probably only temporarily.

7. The financial resources in question include not only those of the student and his or her parents but also those of the school itself. Operating study abroad programs is expensive; encouraging students to attend programs operated by others and offering transfer credit means losing tuition revenue. It also should be noted that the impact of class on study abroad is not limited to financial resources; it also includes the effect of parents' "cultural capital" including whether they have traveled abroad, are aware of international issues, and so on.

8. California is the paradigm for this. It should be noted, however, that "Asian" is not a single and internally homogeneous category. Asian groups vary in their economic standing and in the extent to which their children will benefit from admissions policies emphasizing grades and test scores alone.

9. Such teaching might, in fact, be one of the most important exceptions to the tendency for "applied" courses to dominate in less elite schools.

10. Among other things, alumni giving and other private benefactions go very disproportionately to the more selective schools. This is only partly because their alumni are better off. It also is because donors like to back winners and be associated with elite institutions. And it might be because students who attend less selective schools feel more like they have bought educational goods in a pure market transaction and less like they have been admitted to membership in a privileged status group. Those who attended schools without a strong (usually residential) community also might have developed weaker loyalties. The primary exception to this pattern is corporate donors. These often back elite institutions with either the students or researchers of which they wish to have a connection. But they also back local schools as a

part of their involvement in local communities, economies, and labor markets.

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