



# Creating *Flexibility* in

**The Time for Change Is Now**  
By William E. Kirwan

Despite the general perception of being hotbeds of liberalism, universities are among the most tradition-bound, conservative organizations in society. Change is not a popular concept in academe. In a way, this is one of our strengths. It has enabled us to sustain rock-solid values and avoid becoming faddish. There are, however, issues that cry out for change and that call upon us to rethink our traditional approach.

Just as the corporate community saw the need to adjust personnel policies—with the addition of flex-time, telecommuting, and other family-friendly innovations—to attract and retain men and women seeking to better balance career and family, so too must higher education acknowledge these desires and act accordingly. And just as the armed forces saw the need to embrace affirmative action in order to create the most effective, cohesive, capable military force possible, so too must higher education work to ensure a diverse, representative core of educators and researchers.

Career flexibility for tenured and tenure-track faculty is no longer a nicety; it is a necessity, to ensure that today's faculty are able to prepare for promotion and tenure review during the probationary period. Institutional leaders need to broaden the terms of rewards for what is considered scholarship.

Creating greater flexibility in tenure-track faculty careers is important for several reasons: We find ourselves at a point where many of the baby-boomers who pursued careers in academia are approaching retirement age. At the same time, the enormous baby-boom “echo” generation is approaching college age. Complicating matters further, this cohort of soon-to-be college students is largely minority and of low income. If we do not find a way to attract and retain greater numbers of highly qualified men and women to academia, we simply will be unable to accommodate the upcoming enrollment surge. We will be forced to restrict access or compromise quality. There is no other option.

Finally, we must acknowledge the added pressure on our colleges and universities, especially our research universities, that has come with the need to be competitive in what is now a truly global economy. Excellence in higher education is more important than ever before in securing a prosperous future, both for our citizens and for our nation as a whole.

When it comes to accommodating the changing needs of faculty on our campuses, presidential leadership and passionate commitment are crucial. To assist the higher education community in addressing this issue, the

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# Tenure-Track Faculty Careers

## Valuing Public Scholarship By Nancy Cantor

**M**uch to my surprise over the years, the corporate and even the military worlds have been far ahead of the academy in nurturing a diverse workforce and a creative workplace. Corporations took the lead on flex-time, daycare, and domestic partner benefits, and the military was ahead on race relations and affirmative action, although not on gender or gay rights.

Universities must recruit and retain diverse talent if we are to keep our campuses fresh and alive with vibrant exchanges of people and ideas. Diversity and excellence go hand in hand, so we must be vigilant in creating environments that welcome and nurture diverse and excellent people and ideas.

The social and behavioral sciences, such as my own field of social psychology, have a long tradition of action research and community-based engagement. The flexible support required for such work may not be perfect, but most universities manage to recognize and reward its value. Some journals evaluate and credit excellence in such endeavors, and there is some—though not enough—sponsored research support for it. Some places even take action research and community-based engagement into account in evaluating tenure, recognizing that such work often requires a longer temporal horizon to see productivity.

The interdisciplinary and collaborative parts of these traditions—such as the sharing of ideas and credit—are less well-developed and less well-supported, but there is a growing awareness of the importance of these kinds of exchanges to true innovation. Unfortunately, however, junior faculty members still are often discouraged from participation.

Just as I would argue that it is critical that we open the gates of the ivory tower and engage with the world, so too would I argue that we need new systems of structuring faculty life. Many outstanding faculty members, especially faculty of color, particularly in interdisciplinary fields and particularly on urban campuses, are committed to experimental public practice. For these scholars, boundary-crossing intellectual work grows out of collaborations with partners in schools, museums, communities of faith, theaters, city agencies, and libraries. Such work examines, and strengthens, democratic citizenship in rapidly changing, multi-ethnic settings.

To share our knowledge generously in a knowledge economy, we must find ways to stretch our traditions and support these “culture workers.” Mentoring, financial support, and

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American Council on Education's Office of Women in Higher Education has issued *An Agenda for Excellence: Creating Flexibility in Tenure-Track Faculty Careers*, which advocates numerous recommendations for greater career flexibility, especially with regard to women in their childbearing years. Each of these changes will require consistent and committed presidential leadership.

First and foremost, presidents must work to raise awareness of the problems that higher education faculty encounter regarding their recruitment, retention, and retirement. Second, they must initiate a dialogue on the need to alter aspects of the structure of the academy with

respect to tenured and tenure-track faculty. Third, presidents must develop thoughtful, effective approaches to assist their universities in implementing promising practices in this area.

At its recent Annual Meeting, ACE began the process of building upon the report with an extensive panel discussion that outlined the issues and examined some of the early examples of best practices that are being pursued. We will continue to explore this critical issue further in the months ahead through various forums and conversations, which we hope will lead to the kind of change in the tenure processes that are needed in academe today. ■

## Growing and Keeping Our Own

By France Córdova

A recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* nailed the problem: While women outnumber men as undergraduates nationwide, the professoriate at research universities is 70 percent male. The lag between the diversity of our current undergraduate students and the diversity of our faculties is not surprising, considering how long it takes for an undergraduate to traverse the pipeline and become a tenured professor. In a science profession, it can take 22 years, allowing for a couple of postdoctoral appointments. Nominally, you could be 40 years old before becoming an associate professor in the physical sciences—long after your high school classmates have become lawyers or physicians.

Women make up 50 percent of Americans obtaining PhDs in the United States, but few are opting for positions at research universities. In 2001, women comprised 48 percent of the professoriate at two-year colleges, 38 percent at four-year colleges, and 28 percent at research universities. Women perceive the latter as unfriendly and not supportive of family lifestyles.

Many surveys of women faculty at research universities point to severe dissatisfaction. A Berkeley professor has found at least one reason: For each year on the tenure track, a male assistant professor is 23 percent more likely than a female to earn tenure, and for each year as an associate

professor, he is 35 percent more likely to do so. Examples abound of what graduate students see as a narrow, competitive, and restrictive culture.

### *The Faculty Family Friendly Edge Initiative*

The new ACE report cites national data from the Survey of Doctorate Recipients, showing that many women and men leak from the pipeline at an early career stage because of family concerns. The University of California's (UC) own survey, eliciting responses from 4,400 faculty, found work and family stress pervasive among faculty parents.

UC is addressing this by turning a problem into a competitive advantage, through its Faculty Family Friendly Edge program. We have developed a set of university-wide policy and program initiatives aimed at giving UC a competitive advantage by improving the work and family lives of our ladder-rank faculty.

UC found that several family-friendly policies put into place in 1988, including tenure clock extension for new parents, and paid childbearing leave, were underused because of lack of awareness and fear of negative consequences. To remedy this, a new report proposes increasing time off for active service-modified duties (ASMD), making ASMD and tenure clock extension the default option, and centralizing funding for replacing faculty due to family leave and modified duties.



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public engagement sabbaticals are important, but our key focus should be on the tenure and promotion evaluation process and criteria.

The current tenure and promotion system exacts a high price. It is costly to communities, which aren't getting access to educational partners; to students, who do not have opportunities for significant public work through the curriculum; and to faculty scholars, who can't claim community-based intellectual work in a way that counts at tenure time. If we alter the tenure process to accommodate public scholarship, both communities and universities will benefit. We must adapt existing tenure clock calendars

and the ways in which interdisciplinary work is evaluated. We also should give full tenure rights to interdisciplinary programs. We need to shape many different portfolios of faculty roles, akin to joint appointments between campuses and cultural institutions. However, we need to be firm about these as tenure-track positions, so we don't create a second class of faculty and devalue this kind of public scholarship in the process.

Taking this kind of public scholarship seriously will refresh the public's commitment to its social compact with higher education, cement diversity directly in the excellence of our institutions, and enliven the creativity of the campus. ■

## New Rules for a New Environment By Molly Broad

Competitiveness in a global economy can no longer be achieved by seizing land or other natural resources or by exploiting labor. The future strength of our economy will be built through investment in intangible assets such as intellectual capital. By the end of this decade, 85 percent of all new jobs in our economy will require a college education.

The pending retirement of baby boomers will only heighten the growing demand for highly trained workers in the United States. If we maintain current levels of educational attainment, and if global trends continue, the country will face a shortage of about 12 million college-educated workers by 2020.

Along with the general population, university faculty are aging, with ominous implications. Large numbers of faculty hired in the 1960s and 1970s—in response to the baby boom—are fast approaching retirement age. Meanwhile, the number of doctorates awarded in the United States remains below the high-water mark of the 1990s. While some fields are experiencing gains in the number of doctorates earned, others have actually dropped below 1973 levels. More graduate students are going into post-docs and staying in such positions for longer periods of time. Simultaneously, the hiring of non-tenure-track faculty is growing.

Over the past three decades, foreign students have accounted for virtually all of the overall

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growth in the number of doctorates awarded, but changes in visa requirements and foreign economic strategies are leading to a reduction of foreign graduate students, especially from countries like China. As a result, we must anticipate further declines in the overall number of PhDs being awarded.

Such issues underscore the challenges we face in maintaining the professoriate. The University of North Carolina (UNC), which enrolls about 190,000 students, is experiencing unprecedented enrollment growth. We've added 30,000 students over the past five years and are bracing for another 50,000 this decade. We will need thousands of additional faculty to serve this growing body of students, but—like the rest of higher education—we have seen substantial decreases in the proportion of our faculty under age 40 and large increases in the proportion over 55.

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Additional UC proposals include offering flexible part-time options for ladder-rank faculty; developing a work-family policy web site; disseminating a recruitment brochure that advertises family-friendly policies, resources, and benefits; providing an annual “school for chairs” and campus-level advisory committees; increasing the availability of university-sponsored childcare; providing emergency backup childcare; and providing adoption benefits. (See <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu>.)

### What Else Can We Do?

My conversations with women faculty at UC Riverside reveal that we are not doing enough to “grow our own.” We have the most diverse population of any UC campus: more than 75 percent students of color, with 30 percent from underrepresented minorities, including 24 percent who are Latino and 6 percent who are African American. Yet our faculty does not mirror this diversity; women constitute only 24 percent.

What is missing is good mentoring. There are not enough women or minority faculty to mentor our students, even those students who belong to clubs such as the National Society of Black Engineers and Latinos in Science. UC Riverside is particularly keen to mentor students in research projects, because this draws them into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields. Diversity plans are required from all deans.

As *The Chronicle* article described, leadership at the top makes a difference. Some ideas that seem to improve hiring rates for women at research universities are: (1) discussing what constitutes bias in hiring and how to avoid it; (2) rating job finalists based on specific criteria rather than general ones; and (3) searching for faculty in less traditional places.

The early maps of our planet labeled the edges of the known world “here be dragons.” We have identified the dragons—the issues that loom like hapless specters on our path toward a more inclusive academy. With clarity of purpose we can turn our attention to a place no farther than our own campuses, where there be dragons of ignorance and inertia worthy of fighting. ■

There is no single solution to these problems, but within UNC, we are pursuing several strategies grouped around greater management flexibility, more competitive personnel policies and programs, stopping the tenure clock, and facilitating reasigned time for faculty. We have urged our campuses to publicize related policies widely, and we are broadening our rewards and our incentives.

One of the useful things we have done is to institute phased retirement, which works as well as any tenure buy-out program. There is a very high degree of satisfaction among faculty who have chosen phased retirement, with 93 percent saying they would participate again if given the chance. We also have surveyed senior faculty to identify

issues of greatest concern. Chief among these are health benefits, particularly in retirement.

Issues that may not have been at the top of our list 20 or 30 years ago now are playing an increasingly important role and, for that reason, we also are surveying faculty early in their careers. As we work to

attract younger faculty and to provide an inviting environment for women and persons of color, the issue of balancing one’s professional life with a fulfilling personal or family life presents us with new opportunities to think about how we reward and prepare our professoriate.

Finally, as leaders, we must embrace the demand for change and respond to it. We should not expect old rules to work in a new environment. We need to start thinking strategically and building policies that will help us attract and retain the finest-quality faculty. Otherwise, we will not be able to carry out our mission. If we rely too heavily on adjunct or part-time faculty, we will become very different institutions. In my opinion, this begs the question: “How can the United States maintain its preeminence as having the finest universities in the world?” ■

