

Fall 1990

# The Academic Workplace (Fall/Winter 1990): Faculty Shortages: Are They Here? What Can We Do About Them?

New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston

Zelda F. Gamson  
*University of Massachusetts Boston*

Dorothy E. Finnegan  
*University of Massachusetts Boston*

Ted I.K. Youn  
*Boston College*

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# The Academic Workplace

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Mary-Beth McGee, *Editor*

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## *A Letter from the Director:*

The feature article in this issue of *The Academic Workplace* is about faculty shortages, a topic that has reached the national media. Because I am codirecting a team of researchers who are studying faculty shortages in New England, I am keenly aware that "shortage" is a definitional matter. In 1884, Harvard had 19 professors with Ph.D.'s, on a faculty of 189; Michigan had 6 Ph.D.'s on a faculty of 88. Few, perhaps none, of the faculty included women or blacks. Did Harvard and Michigan have a shortage of Ph.D.'s in 1884? Of women? Of blacks? Probably not, given the standards of the time. Our standards have changed. We want faculty with doctorates. We no longer seek only males and white skins but females and people with other skin colors as well.

As my colleagues and I travel through the region interviewing senior administrators, department chairs, and faculty members, we have encountered more than a little skepticism about shortage projections. A large number of departments have not hired a new tenure-track faculty member in years--and some feel they never will. Some have had to fire faculty because of reductions in state funding or enrollment shortfalls. Others have been under hiring freezes for so long that they have forgotten how to carry out a search. Many fill vacancies with temporary appointments to the "gypsies" of the "lost generation" who earned their Ph.D.'s during the glut of the 1970s. The gypsies are anxiously awaiting the shortages, lest they be too old by the time they materialize. When there is an opening for a regular position and a search committee carries out its work, there is a good chance that it will be aborted in

some institutions because of financial problems.

These experiences are not universal. Colleges and universities with the wherewithal are raiding one another as well as less fortunate institutions. They are wooing graduate school stars around the country with offers of housing, support for spouses, and release time. "Stockpiling" faculty against retirements has become a preferred practice in the schools that can afford it. As Jack Schuster points out, the shift in the faculty labor market may only increase the substantial inequality among institutions at a time when the troubled economy is hitting some public and private institutions hard.

On that cheerful note, I encourage you to be in touch with us about your reactions to this or any other article in the newsletter. The Resource Center is dedicated to stimulating good talk and fellowship among college and university people in New England. We continue to run our ongoing groups: the Academic Affairs Roundtable for senior academic officers, the Middle Academic Administrators Group, and the Higher Education Research Seminar. We are sponsoring two workshops this year on ethical issues, one on free speech and its limitations and the other on community and diversity. Our research projects, described on page two of this issue, take us to many colleges and universities in the region. An affiliated journal, *Metropolitan Universities*, and a new working paper series round out our activities.

I hope you are having a productive and enjoyable fall. Please note our new address and do stay in touch!

Zelda F. Gamson, Director

### Current Research Projects

#### **The General Education Project**

The General Education Project is beginning its second year of study on the implementation of general education in institutions with limited resources. In addition to Zelda Gamson, director of the Resource Center, and Sandra Kanter, project director, several research associates have joined the project-- Howard London, a faculty member at Bridgewater State College, Jana Nidiffer of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and Research Associate Robert Ross.

Telephone surveys of seventy institutions in New England have been completed. Based upon the surveys, a number of institutions were identified as having made significant changes in their general education curricula. Site visits to four of these institutions were completed last year, and another five will be visited this year.

Although the project will continue through 1991, the team is already busy disseminating its results. Members of the project presented their initial findings at two major conferences, the American Association for Higher Education Assessment Conference and the Association of American Colleges' annual meetings. A paper on the project is available as a working paper from the Resource Center, and another article on the results of the telephone survey is being prepared.

#### **Faculty Labor Market Project**

With two years of funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Resource Center has spent the last year studying how New England's colleges and universities are contending with potential faculty shortages. Codirectors Zelda Gamson and

Ted I. K. Youn, a faculty member at Boston College, have been working closely with Dorothy E. Finnegan of Penn State, Donna Schroth of Harvard, Robert Ross and Jan Civian. After a series of telephone interviews with representatives of colleges and universities in New England, the project team has been conducting intensive fieldwork at three universities and one college about how faculty are recruited, promoted, and retained and what is being done to plan for the faculty of the future. They are concentrating on five departments: English, mathematics, business, education, and a fifth, "wild card" department, which differs from institution to institution. The excerpt of a longer paper, which appears on page 4 of this issue of *The Academic Workplace*, is the first publication from the project. Additional publications are available as working papers from the Resource Center. (See the list of NERCHE working papers on page 10.)

#### **Minority Faculty Project**

The Education Resources Institute (TERI) funded the Resource Center to study the status of black and Hispanic faculty in Massachusetts colleges and universities. Under the direction of Visiting Fellow Sandra E. Elman, a questionnaire was sent in the winter of 1990 to 86 two- and four-year colleges and universities in the Commonwealth-- 29 public and 57 private institutions. Seventy-two institutions (84 percent) responded, an unusually high return for a mail questionnaire. One hundred percent of the liberal arts colleges, public comprehensive, and doctoral-granting institutions responded.

The results of the survey will be available in the winter of 1991. Some preliminary findings: overall, there are 726 (4.4 percent) black and Hispanic faculty out of a total of 16,316 faculty in

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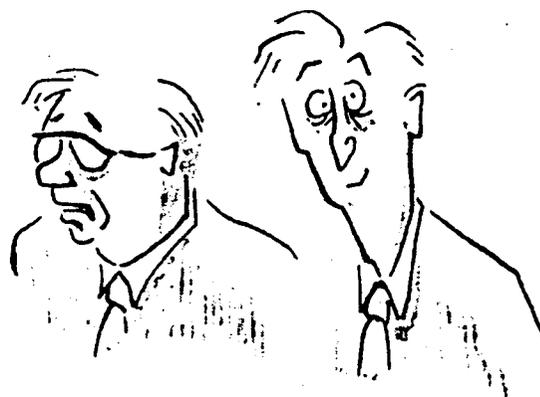
the 72 responding institutions. In private institutions 3.9 percent and in public institutions 5.4 percent of the faculty are black or Hispanic. Ten of the institutions have no black or Hispanic faculty at all.

Black and Hispanic faculty tend to be distributed across the tenure track ranks more than faculty overall, reflecting their recent hiring. More senior faculty are to be found in doctoral-granting universities and community colleges than in liberal arts colleges and comprehensive institutions. Males outnumber females among black and Hispanic faculty overall, with females more concentrated in the lower ranks. Nearly two-thirds of black and Hispanic faculty are in the social sciences and humanities. A surprising finding is that only 6.4 percent hold appointments in education, nationally a field in which minority faculty tend to cluster.

The study found that black and Hispanic graduate students, constitute 7.7 percent of all doctoral candidates, 15.3 percent of all doctoral candidates in public institutions and 4 percent in private institutions. Almost one-half of all black and Hispanic graduate students are in education. The next highest concentration is in the social sciences, followed by the life sciences and foreign languages.

Responses to questions on hiring and recruitment reveal several important findings. Between 1985 and 1989 private institutions hired a total of 175 black and Hispanic faculty (10 percent of all faculty hired in that period), while public institutions hired 88 (9 percent of all faculty hired). More black and Hispanic faculty were hired in the later years of this period than in the early years: in 1989, 13.5 percent of new faculty hires were black and Hispanic, compared to 5.3 percent in 1985.

Few colleges and universities, private or public, have set specific goals for increasing the number of minority faculty, and they have not developed university-wide faculty hiring policies. However, several public community colleges are establishing goals for the 1990s under the Massachusetts Regional Community Colleges' Affirmative Action Plan and the Board of Regents of Higher Education Plan. Hiring freezes in the public sector have--and undoubtedly will--limit the capacity of these institutions to recruit black and Hispanic faculty.



V. Stinson

*"Bad news. Our money for appointments has been withdrawn. I'm afraid that will leave your committee with nothing to do this year."*



## *The Academic Workplace* *page four*

**Faculty Shortages:  
Are They Here?  
What Can We Do About Them?**  
Zelda F. Gamson  
Dorothy E. Finnegan  
Ted I. K. Youn

In the last two years, the national media and higher education publications have begun warning of faculty shortages (Fiske 1988; Fowler 1988; Berger 1989).

After a period of stagnation during the 1970s and 1980s, the demand for faculty over the next two decades will increase sharply. Combined with projected lags in supply, heightened demand will turn a buyers' market into a sellers' market. Short-range gaps between supply and demand are already beginning to be felt in some fields (El-Khawas 1989). Problems in the faculty labor market are projected to be most acute in the late 1990s and the early part of the new century (Bowen and Sosa 1989; McGuire and Price 1989). Bowen and Sosa predict shortages in the humanities and social sciences, especially after the year 2002, and McGuire and Price predict that heightened demand for faculty in the natural sciences will be greatest around 2000.

As early as the mid-1970s Allan Cartter, in *Ph.D.'s and the Academic Labor Market* (1976), predicted substantial shifts in the academic labor market. In his analysis of demand for faculty, Cartter distinguished between *replacement demand* and *enrollment demand*. Replacement demand is determined by faculty retirement and the net migration into and out of academic careers. Enrollment demand is determined by overall college enrollments and student/faculty ratios. In the 1970s and 1980s, replacement demand and enrollment demand were quite stable. In the 1990s, replacement demand will increase substantially as a

result of the retirement of unprecedented numbers of faculty throughout the 1990s. Enrollment demand is projected to increase modestly when the children of the "baby boomers" begin college and thus further increase the demand for faculty.

Bowen and Schuster, in *American Professors: A National Resource Imperiled* (1986), forecast the need for 180,000 new faculty appointments in the second half of the 1990s and an additional 160,000 between the years 2000 and 2004. These 340,000 new faculty represent almost three-quarters of the current full-time faculty across the country. Bowen and Sosa's study of doctorate-holding faculty in the arts and sciences at four-year colleges and universities in 1987--which represents about one-third of all full-time faculty--conclude that more than half of the faculty are likely to have departed by 2002. These departures, overall, will be carried out at a relatively smooth and steady pace throughout the 1990s. Tightening in the labor market will begin as early as 1992, and the most dramatic changes should occur between 1997 and 2002, when there could be about four candidates for every five open positions.

These supply-side estimates are based on projections that are less predictable than demand-side projections because of the variety of faculty pools from which institutions can draw.

Furthermore, it is not clear how quickly graduate schools, the traditional source of new faculty hires, will expand after more than a decade of declining enrollments. In this period, the graduate schools have lost ground in the competition for the most talented undergraduates. There is no reason to think that this traditional source will change in its ability to supply faculty overnight, especially with financial pressures on graduate students and

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perceptions of disadvantages in faculty salaries and work conditions compared to other professions (Bowen and Schuster 1986). Even if graduate enrollments do expand, the average time allotted to completing the doctorate--approximately ten years post-baccalaureate--is not likely to change (National Research Council 1989).

There are indications that the faculty labor market has already begun to shift. Senior administrators recently surveyed by the American Council on Education reported that it took them longer to find qualified faculty for full-time jobs and that they had a harder time getting top applicants to accept their offers, compared to several years ago (El-Khawas 1989). These conditions already exist within high-demand fields in the humanities and social sciences, which Bowen and Sosa project will experience shortages even greater than those in mathematics and the physical sciences.

Competition for faculty, which has already begun to intensify, is especially fierce for minority faculty. Institutions with enough resources have begun raiding faculty from less fortunate institutions and "stockpiling" them against projected retirements. The outcome is that "institutions currently rich in faculty are destined to get richer--or, at a minimum, hold their own--while the poor are going to have to scramble mightily just to field minimally qualified faculty by decade's end" (Schuster 1990, 38).

The Faculty Labor Market Project is studying how some institutions in New England are responding to changes in their labor pools. Some departments remain passive, while others are operating proactively. Innovations in recruiting and retaining faculty do not require major fiscal commitments, but they do demand deliberate action. The departments that are most successful in recruiting and retaining productive

faculty are devising creative strategies to this end. As we look toward the 1990s, we will suggest several ways in which higher education might respond to changes in the faculty labor market. While most national studies propose supply-side responses to shortages, such as increasing Ph.D. production with more fellowships and financial aid and speeding up the completion time for the doctorate, we propose changes on the demand side as well.

Our interviews have demonstrated that some departments are experimenting with *differentiated career lines*. Some departments have introduced the idea of positions that are devoted primarily to research, others to teaching, and still others to various mixtures of research, teaching, and service. Promotion, tenure, and pay increases are being adjusted in ways to support differentiated career lines.

Another demand-side response is to actively promote *alternative sources of faculty*. Adjunct faculty who are well-known because they have taught for several years at a particular institution can be moved into full-time tenure track positions. ABD's can be "groomed" to complete their degrees while continuing to teach in adjunct positions. Promising undergraduates can be "grown" through graduate school in preparation for a position.

A third possibility is to introduce *flexible timetables for promotion and tenure decisions*. Inflexible schedules and cumbersome or unrealistic standards inhibit responsiveness to competitive labor market conditions. Institutions should consider offering tenure-track faculty research and leave options while "stopping the clock" for promotion and tenure decisions, reduced and part-time teaching loads, and early promotion.

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Finally, institutions may want to view prospective shortages as an opportunity to *strengthen their niche* by building strong and unique programs in certain areas, thus making themselves more attractive in the competition for faculty. Our research suggests the competitive advantage of this approach in, for example, an unusual program in occupational health and safety, a strong capability in the performing arts, and a sharp focus on applied mathematics. These special features are important in attracting not only students, but faculty.

Changes in faculty labor markets, in other words, will have profound effects on many different aspects of colleges and universities. If the projection studies are accurate, the data should provide enough timely information to administrators to allow the labor market to self-correct, thus avoiding the very outcomes predicted!

*Zelda Gamson is director of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. Dorothy E. Finnegan is a graduate student at Pennsylvania State University. Ted I. K. Youn is on the faculty at Boston College. Excerpted from a forthcoming article in Metropolitan Universities.*



"I take it this is in support of your bid for tenure?"

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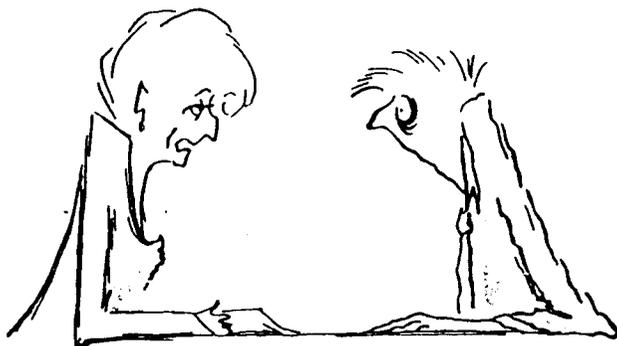
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Vivian S. Hinson

"Yes, we do have an early retirement plan, but five years of service is just a wee bit premature."



Publications

*They're Not Dumb, They're Different: Stalking the Second Tier*  
by Sheila Tobias

In her report, *They're Not Dumb, They're Different: Stalking the Second Tier*, Sheila Tobias explores the reasons behind the paucity of college science majors and the resulting shortage of scientists in this country. College students are not unwilling to try science: half a million freshmen complete introductory science courses and many finish up to two years toward a concentration. Most, however, switch to other fields before they graduate. Harvard chemistry professor Dudley Hershbach argues that this is due to faculty preferences for students he labels the "sprinters," those who grasp introductory concepts quickly. The "long distance" students initially experience difficulty in science, receive little support to persevere, and eventually choose other concentrations. Thus, the contribution these students could make to various scientific fields is lost.

Although the origins of our national science illiteracy may have its roots in pre-college science education, Tobias maintains that preventing this "hemorrhaging" of talent away from the sciences is the responsibility of colleges. They must recruit and encourage the "second tier" of students to the sciences. She recommends mandatory exit interviews for students switching to other majors, as well as limits on class size, and a new focus in the classroom on the broader meaning of the field. These measures will help students struggling with introductory courses to understand and appreciate the applications. In this way, Tobias hopes, more "long distance" students will persevere in the sciences and go on to make their contribution to the field. Available for \$2.00 from Science News Books, 1719 N Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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### *Higher Education and the Real World: The Story of CAEL* by Zelda F. Gamson

From its founding in 1974 as a project of the Educational Testing Service, CAEL--now the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning--has been one of the great success stories in American education. It has thrived at a time when many other innovative organizations had to trim their sails--if they survived at all--and has succeeded in capturing the imagination of leaders in some of the most prestigious foundations, associations, and other organizations surrounding higher education.

Using CAEL as a kind of prism to refract the state of higher education in America, Gamson covers the history of CAEL from its beginnings to the present. In the process, she provides important insights into how adult education has developed over the past fifteen years, what strategies for change in higher education do and do not work, how the idea and practice of credit for prior learning for adults came into being, and the role of leadership and organization building in adult and higher education. Available from Longwood Publishing Group, Inc., Wolfboro, New Hampshire; phone (800) 426-0489 or fax (207) 324-0349.

### *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service*

The National Society for Internships and Experiential Education has published a comprehensive three-volume resource book covering both the practical and theoretical aspects of enhancing the educational value of community and public service experiences. Volume 1 contains principles of good practice, rationales, theories, research, history, and guides for both institutional and

public policy. Volume 2 offers practical advice on specific issues in effective programs and courses, with more than eighty case studies of programs based in college, K-12, and community settings. Volume 3 is an annotated bibliography. Volumes 1 and 2 are \$54 each, and Volume 3 is \$15.

For further information on discounts or to order *Combining Service and Learning*, please contact the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education, 3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 207, Raleigh, North Carolina 27609; phone: (919) 787-3263.

### **Call for Papers**

*The Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, published by the National Center for the Study of the Freshman Year Experience at the University of South Carolina, has requested papers suitable for their readership. The objectives of the journal are to disseminate research findings on the retention of freshmen; to publish information on applied freshman programs; to share methodology and results of freshman program assessment; and to examine institutional policies and programs that affect freshmen.

For further information, please contact Dr. Dorothy S. Fidler, editor, *Journal of the Freshman Year Experience*, the National Center for the Study of the Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina, 1728 College Street, Columbia, South Carolina 29208; phone: (803) 777-6029.

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**Conferences and Workshops**

The first of two workshops cosponsored by the Resource Center and the Division of Continuing Education at UMass/Boston on "Ethical Issues in a Time of Change and Diversity" took place on October 29 at the Downtown Campus of UMass. The topic of the first session was "Free Speech and Its Limitations." Gregory Keith Spence, Esq., general counsel and vice president of Brandeis University, was the featured speaker.

The next workshop will be held on March 8, 1991, on the topic "Community and Diversity." The moderator for both workshops is Dr. Bobbie Knable, dean of students at Tufts University.

For further information about the workshops, contact the Division of Continuing Education at UMass/Boston, (617) 287-7290.

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Mount Ida College in Newton, Massachusetts, has established a new school, the Naples Institute in Naples, Florida. The institute is offering the first in a series of conferences for educators, which will address national higher education issues.

The first conference will be on "Forging Partnerships: Effective Academic Governance for the 1990s," to be held from January 2-4, 1991, in Naples. Participants will examine the principal challenges now confronting governance systems at colleges and universities. They will define for the coming decade those models which will be the most inclusive, effective, and creative.

For further information, contact James Martin, vice president for academic affairs, Mount Ida College, Newton, Massachusetts 02159; phone (617) 969-7000, ext. 111.

The faculty and staff of Massasoit Community College in Brockton, Massachusetts, visited Ellis Island last spring as part of a continuing series of professional development seminars. The study tour had special significance for community college faculty and staff as they continue to serve immigrant populations and their children. The purpose of this tour was to emphasize the role of community colleges in promoting cultural pluralism and to draw a parallel between Ellis Island and community colleges as gateway to opportunity. In addition to the Ellis Island visit, faculty and staff attended lectures by speakers from LaGuardia Community College and the Teacher's College at Columbia University.

For further information contact James P. Yess, dean of academic affairs, Massasoit Community College, Brockton, Massachusetts 02402; phone (508) 588-9100, ext. 185, or Professor Richard Rapacz at ext. 259.

**The Interstate Interchange**

The Spring/Summer 1991 issue of *The Academic Workplace* will inaugurate a new section called "The Interstate Interchange." To be included in this new section, send us short announcements about interesting programs or activities on your campus. Deadline for submissions is April 1, 1991.

**Staff Notes**

The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded a grant of almost one million dollars to the Boston Private Industry Council to develop a pilot program of work-based learning in allied health fields. Ernest Lynton, senior associate of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education, was a major initiator and participant in the early planning stages of this project. He expects to continue his participation in the design and implementation phases of the project.

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**NERCHE Working Papers**

**Working Paper #1:**  
Sandra E. Elman  
*The Academic Workplace: Perception versus Reality*  
Fall 1989

**Working Paper #2:**  
Zelda F. Gamson, Dorothy E. Finnegan and Ted I. K. Youn  
*Assessing Faculty Shortages in Comprehensive Colleges and Universities*  
Fall 1990

**Working Paper #3:**  
Ted I. K. Youn  
*The Sociology of Academic Careers and Academic Labor Markets*  
September 1990

**Working Paper #4:**  
Ernest A. Lynton  
*New Concepts of Professional Expertise: Liberal Learning as Part of Career-Oriented Education.*  
Fall 1990

**Working Paper #5:**  
Sandra Kanter, Howard London, and Zelda F. Gamson  
*Implementing General Education: Initial Findings*  
Fall 1990

**Working Paper #6:**  
Ted I. K. Youn, Dorothy E. Finnegan, and Zelda F. Gamson  
*The Evolution of the Comprehensive Sector in American Higher Education.*  
Fall 1990

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**New England Resource Center for Higher Education  
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Graduate College of Education  
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