

Turning Points

~~Crises~~ Structural changes
in US public higher education

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Five moments in the history of the American university¹

- Colonial period: the sectarian college
- Mid-19th C: Land grant state universities
- Late-19th C: “German model” research universities
- Mid-20th C: GI Bill / “Golden Age”
- Late-20th C: Neoliberal / “corporate university” / post-welfare state university

• Jeffrey J Williams, The Post-Welfare State University, *American Literary History* 18.1 (Spring 2006): 190-216

The “Golden Age” (1945-75)

- The GI Bill
- Large-scale federal funding of basic research
- The New Deal and the Cold War

The Key(nes) to the Golden Age

- Public education as investment in the future
- Public education as a public good (in a non-technical sense)
- Government as organized expression of community decisions

HE as a public good

- Funding: taxpayer contributions / no user fees
- Widespread economic and social benefits
- Unpredictable innovation
- “Comedy of the commons”
 - Non-zero sum: one plus one = three
 - Shared knowledge base
 - Shared communication means

First Turning Point (1975-85)

- The triumph of neo-liberalism
 - “there is no such thing as society”
 - “government is not the solution; it’s the problem”
- The denial of education as a public good
 - Education becomes a commodity
 - Universities become credentializing agencies
 - Students become
 - consumers of services
 - self-entrepreneurs making a private investment
- *A reductio*: public education is immoral

A Vicious Spiral

- State revenue caps: “Tax revolts” of the 1970s
 - Prop 13: response to demand by Cal Supreme Court for equal state spending in K-12
 - Local property tax differentials and public schools
- State costs rise: prison and Medicaid
- = Cuts in state support for higher education
 - Increases in tuition and fees
 - Resistance to “paying for other people’s kids”
- More cuts / decreased access
- Increased private payoff / increased human capital outlook
- At same time as increased university costs / debt:
 - Student amenities, science bldg construction

Second Turning Point

Corporate University (1985-2008)

- % faculty composition¹
 - 1975: T = 29.0 / TT = 16.1 Total = 45.1 // GS = 20 // FTNT = 10.3 // PT = 24
 - 2012: T = 16.7 / TT = 7.4 Total = 24.1// GS = 19.3 // FTNT = 15.4 // PT = 41.3
- Growth of administration (1987-2007)²
 - 17.6% faculty increase relative to enrollment
 - 35% management increase relative to enrollment
- Student work³
 - 78% of college students now work
 - 25% work full-time
- Debt⁴
 - Mean UG student debt: @ \$25K (for students w/ any loans at all)

(1) 2013 AAUP Contingent Faculty Index

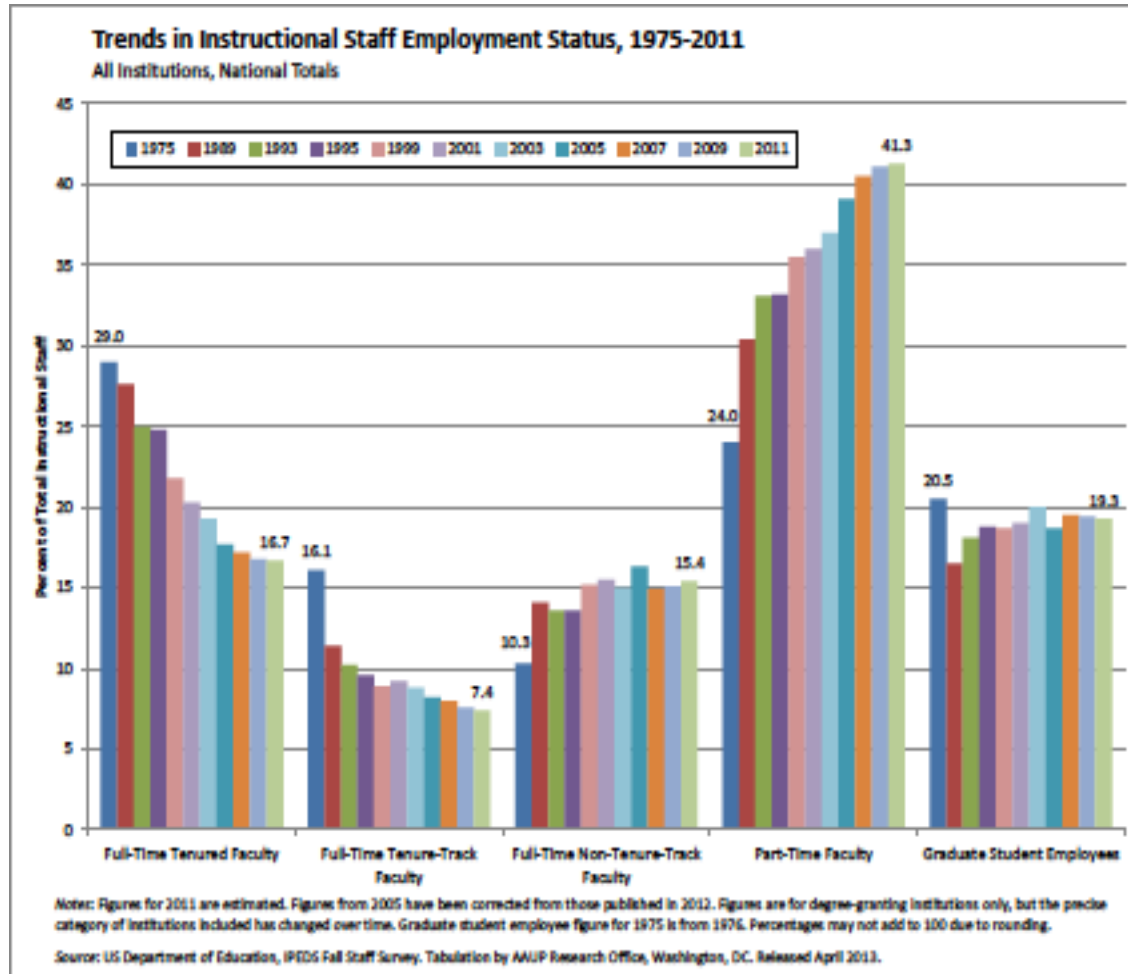
(2) Trends in Higher Education Labor Force, Center for College Affordability and Productivity (2009)

(3) American Council on Education Brief, May 2006

(4) College Board, Trends in Student Aid 2008, p. 5 (loans) / Sallie Mae, Student use of credit cards (2009) (credit cards)

Trends in Instructional Staff, 1975-2011

http://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/files/AAUP_Report_InstrStaff-75-11_apr2013.pdf



Third Turning Point: The austerity university (2009-

- Accelerations and innovations: quantify everything!
- Internal University structure
 - RCM: atomization to spur competition
 - Hidden cost-shifting: sponsored research loses money
- Debt as social control
- Privatizing services: selling access to students
- Universities: tax dodges for diversified entities
 - Harvard and its endowment
 - UC: real estate, defense, biotech, hospitals: Napolitano!
 - Temple as cautionary tale: bond ratings!

More turning points?

Neo-liberalism

- Political economy / public policy
 - We cannot argue for the ivory tower
 - We must make an economic argument
 - Education as communal investment / public good
- K-24: Canaries in each other's coal mine?
 - K-12: Common Core, testing, vouchers, charters
 - HE: precarious labor

Corporate / austerity university

- Restore collegiality?
 - Do we want faculty governance?
 - Will we settle for “shared governance”?
- Collective bargaining?
 - TT and contingent faculty together
 - Graduate students must organize as well
 - And why not undergrad student workers too?
- Calling the administration’s bluff
 - Nealon, “Assoc Vice-Provost in Grey Flannel Suit”
 - Bring in the MBAs and let’s do a productivity study
 - The corporations of the 2000s vs those of the 1950s

MOOCs

- Bad solution to real problem of one-to-many mass lectures: replace with stars, TAs, student groups
- Putting students to work:
 - Data capture leading to learning software
 - Soft skills and headhunters
 - UG student graders
- Monitoring faculty-student interaction
- De-skilling / standardization of curriculum via quantifiable (or at least “measurable”) assessment = proletarianization
- Tie-in w/ general quantification of productivity
 - Research: number of pubs x impact factor = score
 - Teaching: SCHs per FTE

Personal decisions

Sectors of the job system

- You're not preparing for "the" job market
- You're already part of paid instruction system
- So competition in the TT sector includes not just your cohort, but all contingent labor
 - Graduate student TAs
 - "Just-in-time" hired adjuncts (MA or PhD)
 - Yearly contracted instructors, post-docs, VAPs
 - Multi-year Instructors
 - *And* TT Asst Profs (very little legal recourse pre-6th year and not much really at 6th year)
 - *And* tenured profs (in certain conditions)
- As well as tenured profs

Why is there still a TT sector?

- Given the lower costs of contingent labor for SCH production
 - Salary, obviously
 - But also “flexibility” (= low exposure to benefit cost increases)
- Why is there still anything left?
 - Appeal to UG students and parents
 - Appeal to grad students

BGN or “alt-ac” markets

- BGN = business, government, non-profits
- What are your skills?
- When should you prepare for these markets?
- Career turning points:
 - Entering grad school: MA vs PhD
 - Staying in grad school
 - Preparing for worst: How long as adjunct?
- Principles: risk / reward; opportunity cost; psychic wage

Resources

- Critical resources: Chris Newfield, Bob Meister, Aaron Bady, Marc Bousquet, Michelle Massé, Michael Bérubé
- Factual resources: AAUP
- Action resources:
 - studentdebtcrisis.org / edu-factory.org
 - NewFacultyMajority.info / adjunct.chronicle.com
- Alt-ac resources:
 - MLA > APA?
 - #altac #postac
 - ACLS Public Fellows / Praxis Network / Wilson
 - PMF / FSOT / CSE