

Reflections on Life in Higher Education

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Foreword

If you are in a non-academic professional career and considering the opportunity of a career move to higher education, *Reflections on Life in Higher Education* is a must read for you. These authors tell their stories about what it is like to make the move, what they experienced in their new lives, and the refreshing changes that resulted for them. These colleagues were in the business world before they made the change, yet they provide interesting and helpful advice for those in any profession—nursing, engineering, social services, government, architecture, and beyond.

In my work as a facilitator of faculty learning communities for the last 35 years, I have often encountered professionals new to the academy who were baffled by the change of culture and the different expectations they found. The stories in this collection reflect those encounters accurately, and the advice that these essays offer is invaluable.

Much of the advice is about the importance of finding and building community, and I endorse that advice heartily. As Parker Palmer noted in his take on community in higher education, “Academic culture is a curious and conflicted thing ... infamous for fragmentation, isolation, and competitive individualism—a culture in which community sometimes feels harder to come by than in any other institution on the face of the earth” (Palmer, 2002, p. 179). I have been enthusiastically engaged in building faculty learning communities that offer all faculty in higher education an opportunity to spend a year with like-minded colleagues in building community and investigating an innovation in a scholarly way. The essays in this collection of reflections tell of similar opportunities that enabled the authors to survive and then thrive in higher education.

These reflections will also be of value to anyone in higher ed who is in a part-time position. The various names for this position include “adjunct,” “contingent,” and “retread,” the name one essayist used for someone transferring into the academy from a profession. One author encourages part-timers or any new instructors to visit the teaching center at their college or university. As a director of such

a center for many years, I know the staff there has helpful advice about teaching, learning, and learning communities. The center is the location on campus to locate networks of colleagues with similar interests and challenges.

Ernest Boyer (1990) advocated for a broader definition of scholarship. In expanding the concept of discovery scholarship in the disciplines, he suggested three additional categories: the scholarship of integration, application, and pedagogy (now called the scholarship of teaching and learning). This provided professionals entering higher education after other careers an opportunity to engage in the production of scholarship without a lengthy time-investment in learning the procedures and culture of disciplinary discovery scholarship. Before this broadening, professionals would have to spend several years learning and developing discovery scholarship in their disciplines. Now they can research aspects of their previous professional constructs and experiences and publish their theories and conclusions as the scholarship of application. The scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education also provides ways for them to innovate and assess learning in the classroom, an area of immediate interest as an instructor encounters the new world of students and teaching. Again, faculty learning communities have provided a supportive way to enable “professionals wanting to be academic scholars” to design classroom research and present it on campus along with their community members.

I am editor-in-chief of the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*. This publication offers a venue to those pursuing classroom research, a place in which to share their work. Those professionals new to the academy are welcome to investigate the *Journal* with respect to routes and methods available for getting started in this scholarship, to find one that can combine introductions to teaching, learning, assessment, and scholarship.

The *Journal* publishes four types of scholarship of teaching and learning: research, innovation, integration, and inspiration. Articles in the research category report important results from one’s own experience or research; describe the problem clearly; provide baseline data; explain what the researcher has done and why; and provide results. Items published in the integration category integrate the research of others in a meaningful way; compare or contrast theories; critique results; and/or provide context for future exploration.

Those in the innovation category propose innovation of theory, approach, or process of teaching; provide original and creative ideas based on results of research by self or others; and outline a proposed strategy for testing effectiveness of ideas. Articles in the inspiration category provide inspiration for teaching excellence, and combine personal values, insight, and experience to communicate enthusiasm and dedication to outstanding teaching.

What about the reflections that are part of this collection? What kind of scholarship are they? The most difficult category in which to be accepted for publication is *inspiration*, and it is exciting that *Reflections on Life in Higher Education* provides a collection of such articles.

We may be professionals moving careers into the academy, part-time instructors in tenuous roles, seasoned faculty looking back on a life to celebrate, or early-career faculty on the tenure track. The reflections in this book provide clues and guideposts as to why we have selected paths into higher education. Daloz and colleagues in their research found, as our authors have here, that “We all need a ‘tribe’—a network of belonging that provides security and encourages our finest aspirations. . . . As we live and work in an increasingly diverse world, it is significant that we found *constructive engagement with otherness* to be the single most critical element undergirding commitment to the common good in the lives of those we studied” (Daloz et al., 1996, p. 215).

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Preface

While I was in my second year teaching in the management major at St John's University, a liberal arts school located in Minnesota, a senior department member suggested that I attend the Marketing Management Association's conferences, as I would find excellent opportunities to network with supportive colleagues from around the country who taught at similar types of institutions. I decided to follow the suggestion, and what good advice it was; the result was to take me down a rewarding path in my professional life.

I first met one of my co-authors, Lori Lohman, at one of the MMA's educators' conferences in Nashville, Tennessee. I found myself at the Nashville airport looking for transport to the conference hotel. I wound up on a courtesy van along with another passenger. I am normally a reserved, introverted person, but I knew that if I were to network and gain collegial support I would need to reach out. Summoning the courage, I asked a fellow traveler if she was attending the conference. We introduced ourselves to each other and struck up a conversation. Once we arrived at the conference hotel site, Lori and I in turn met and introduced ourselves to two others who taught at different institutions. We had a wonderful time at the conference getting to know each other. The educators' conference also proved to provide inspiration and a much-needed boost of confidence to help me know I could succeed in a career in higher education.

My networking involvement with the MMA led to many other contacts with esteemed and supportive colleagues—the same ones who contribute their stories to this collection. At another recent MMA conference, one of those colleagues, Nora Ganim Barnes, thought that collectively many of us had experiences that provided insights into the academic world and that we ought to consider sharing with others. Nora and I reached out to our colleagues and the result is the collaboration *Reflections on Life in Higher Education*.

My co-authors and I decided to each write a chapter on our respective academic careers, modeling our thoughts on the notion of a last lecture. For those readers unfamiliar with the concept, many educational institutions honor a long-term retiring professor with an

opportunity to deliver one last lecture to any interested campus community members on any subject of their choosing. With the last lecture structure representing the only criteria, we set out to craft the reflections of how life in higher education impacted six of the co-authors who collectively have 175 years of teaching experience.

Why a series of last lectures? While a number of books on teaching and pedagogy exist, none really address what life is like in academia. No one has written to discuss the practical, pragmatic trials and rewards of teaching in higher education.

Several of the co-authors share common threads in our stories. Most of us entered higher education after first pursuing a non-academic career. We all share a love of teaching, lifelong learning, and collegiality. We are all optimistic about our profession. Academia literally opened up new worlds to each of us. As American colleges sought international students, we faculty in turn sought to travel and experience international cultures to help us in turn prepare our students to engage in a global environment. We all discuss both the rewards and the challenges that one will encounter when pursuing a career in higher education.

Our seventh co-author, Stephanie Jacobsen, is in a PhD program at the University of Rhode Island. She has been an MBA program director and has taught as an adjunct. Her goal is to obtain her doctorate in marketing and to seek her own career path in academia. My fellow co-authors thought her contributions as someone entering the field of academia would create an interesting contrast to those of us who have been teaching so long. Her reflections also should be valued by those considering an entrance into academia.

Interestingly, we all independently took different avenues in discussing our profession. Some took a very personal approach and discuss both academia and life lessons. Others were more detached and described college cultures and the tenure process.

The first challenge for anyone considering a career teaching at a university is how to gain the necessary educational credentials to qualify for a professor's position. Many people at this life stage are already experiencing debt from obtaining an undergraduate degree, paying for living expenses while pursuing a postgraduate degree, and developing a family life. The stresses can be daunting.

Those interested in the teaching profession must realize that a high level of engagement is expected. College teaching is not

a 9–2 job with three weeks off at Christmas and three months off in summer. Professors must be prepared to take part in faculty governance, serve in their academic and greater communities, conduct research, and advise students. Most importantly, they must be ready to partake in the profession of teaching—creating a teaching philosophy, preparing sound pedagogies, and understanding how to deliver effective evaluation and feedback.

Several of the authors of this book found being in the right place at the right time played a key role in our relative success and happiness. I have found myself teaching at three different institutions in my 24-year career—yet all were an excellent fit for me at that given stage in life. Lori Lohman started with one institution, but moved to another that has been an excellent fit for her. Kimberly Folkers has enjoyed her 25 years of academic life at one institution. Lisa Lindgren found herself virtually tenured at a state university, but decided to move closer to her home and has successfully been tenured and promoted and is thriving in the culture of her second academic institution. Michael Messina started a teaching career at a branch campus of a major university, but found a much better fit in his present position where he has moved from teaching into administration.

Did we find the right institutions, or were they ready for us at our given stage of our professional and personal lives? I will let the readers judge for themselves.

As one of our co-authors, Frederick Hoyt, says so well, “You should have been here last week; the fishing was great!” On behalf of my co-authors, we hope those interested in learning more about a career and life in higher education find the fishing “great!”

Rick D. Saucier, DBA

List of Abbreviations

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business
AAUP	American Association of University Professors
ABD	All but dissertation
ACBSP	Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs
COLA	Cost of living adjustment
DBA	Doctor of Business Administration
GMAT	Graduate management admission test
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MIM	Master's in International Management
MMA	Marketing Management Association
MOOC	Massive open online course
PTO	Paid time off
SNCR	Society for New Communications Research
TRA	Trade Readjustment Assistance

About the Authors

Nora Ganim Barnes is Chancellor Professor of Marketing and Director of the Center for Marketing Research at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She has written over 125 articles in academic and professional journals and proceedings, has contributed chapters to books, and has been awarded numerous research grants. Her research has been cited in *Business Week*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *CNN*, *NY Times*, *Bloomberg News*, *Financial Times* and others. Her most recent work covers the use of social media by businesses, charities, and higher education institutions. She has been named a Senior Research Fellow and Research Chair by the Society for New Communications Research.

Kimberly K. Folkers is Associate Professor of Marketing at Wartburg College in Iowa. Her chapter reflects on the twists and turns of an unexpected yet rewarding 25 years of teaching marketing and serving in administrative positions at a small liberal arts college. In addition, it takes a look at some of the challenges and opportunities for faculty working with today's students.

Frederick B. Hoyt, Associate Professor of Business Administration at Illinois Wesleyan University, has been a member of the faculty since 1988. He has published over 50 articles in a variety of journals and international, national, and regional publications in the areas of business strategy, Asian business, services, not-for-profit marketing, and marketing history. He has also done time in the other "real" world.

Stephanie Jacobsen is a doctoral candidate in the marketing program at the University of Rhode Island. She has previously acted as MBA director at UMass Dartmouth and Director of Workforce Development at the New Bedford Chamber of Commerce, and has held department and adjunct faculty positions at Rhode Island College and UMass Dartmouth. Research interests include social media, word of mouth, student satisfaction, and Millennials.

Lisa M. Lindgren is Associate Professor of Global Business Leadership at the College of St Benedict and St John's University in Minnesota. She started her career in the computer networking industry; her last industry employer was Cisco Systems. Lindgren spent five years as a systems analyst, eight years as a product manager, and four years as a writer/editor/consultant. She began teaching in 2000 at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire and is now teaching in her home state of Minnesota.

Lori L. Lohman is Associate Professor of Business Administration at Augsburg College. She has been teaching marketing and management courses for 28 years, of which 25 have been at Augsburg. Prior to teaching, she worked in various business marketing positions. She holds an MBA and a PhD from the University of Minnesota and is the author of multiple articles on teaching.

Michael J. Messina is Professor of Marketing and Director of Graduate Programs in the Dahlkemper School of Business at Gannon University. He has held a variety of teaching and administrative positions during many years of experience in higher education. His chapter highlights his transition from the business world to a career in higher education, including the many paths he took along the way.

Rick D. Saucier is Professor of Marketing at Thomas College in Maine. His chapter outlines his experiences teaching at three different higher education institutions and the important practical and political lessons in carving out a successful career path in academia. Saucier coordinated the writing of his fellow authors in this volume. In the last chapter, he summarizes the findings of his colleagues.