The Future of the Professoriate
Academic Freedom, Peer Review,
and Shared Governance

NEIL W. HAMILTON & JERRY G. GAFF
The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is pleased to publish The Future of the Professoriate: Academic Freedom, Peer Review, and Shared Governance as the first in a series of occasional papers designed to spur dialogue and action about “Intentional Leadership in the New Academy.” The purpose of this new series is to encourage campus leaders at all levels to align their goals for student learning with institutional practices that are intentionally designed and implemented in order to help all students gain the benefits of a public-spirited and engaged liberal education.

Liberal education has always evolved to meet the needs of a changing world, and through innovative approaches on campuses of every kind, AAC&U members are leading an ongoing movement to adapt liberal education to the needs of our time. The 2002 report Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as a Nation Goes to College describes the “New Academy” arising from this movement for change and introduces the idea of “intentionality” as one of its hallmarks. The report makes several recommendations for creating more purposeful educational pathways that culminate in the attainment of essential learning outcomes. It notes, for instance, that “well-designed curricula are more than collections of independent courses; they are pathways for learning. Graduating intentional learners—empowered, informed, and responsible—calls for curricula designed to further learning goals in a sequential manner across all the college years. Goals for learning, transparent to students and professors, justify the curriculum’s design.”

Through the Greater Expectations initiative and, since 2005, through the Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP) initiative, AAC&U has also suggested that, in addition to helping students become more intentional and purposeful, institutions must be led in more purposeful and intentional ways. As the LEAP National Leadership Council argues in its 2007 report, College Learning for the New Global Century, “it is time to move from ‘pilot efforts’ to full-scale commitments.” What is needed now is “vigorous and concerted leadership . . . to build support for a more contemporary framework for college learning and to accelerate the scope and pace of educational change.” The LEAP report also notes, however, that “while recognized leaders can make higher achievement a priority, faculty and teachers who work directly with students are the only ones who can make it actually happen.”

These are challenging times for the faculty members and other campus leaders who are working together to educate a new generation of students—a generation whose backgrounds and abilities are far more diverse than those of any previous generation. Everyone involved in teaching these students, whether in or outside the classroom, must help them understand what a liberal education
can do for them and how they can reach their full potential. Intentional leaders must also think creatively with their colleagues—in a new spirit of collaborative leadership—about the very structures of the academy, many of which were created in a very different national and global environment and designed to meet a different set of demands. As they rethink the structural organization of the academy, however, intentional leaders will need to maintain focus on the core values of liberal education and the principles of excellence that can guide the New Academy into the future.

As we build this New Academy, we can also seek an “inclusive excellence,” one that draws on the assets that everyone brings to the learning environment and that recognizes the interdependence of inclusion and excellence. As AAC&U put it in its most recent strategic plan, “quality and diversity are integral and mutually enriching dimensions of an educationally effective learning environment.”

With the Intentional Leadership in the New Academy series, AAC&U seeks to provide thoughtful analysis, multiple perspectives, and new ideas about how, together, educators can more intentionally lead the way to a new vision for learning. We welcome your comments on the papers published in this series as well as your ideas or suggestions for future topics.

Debra Humphreys
Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs
Association of American Colleges and Universities
The concepts addressed in this publication—academic freedom, with its rights and correlative duties; peer review; and shared governance—form the core of the academic profession’s social contract. Starting with the founding of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1915, a small group of college and university professors devised these concepts to guide the growing academic profession. The concepts are interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and they are integral to the mission of those colleges and universities that (1) conduct research to generate new knowledge and (2) teach students to think critically and form their own ideas based on analysis and evidence. Those pioneering college and university professors showed exceptional vision and courage in beginning to develop professional standards for the professoriate that would ensure integrity in both research and teaching. They also worked with boards of trustees and institutional presidents to gain their support for these standards.

Taken together, the three concepts are central features of the social contract between the professoriate and society that provides autonomy to the academic profession. This contract is secured by the boards of trustees, institutional presidents, and senior administrators who, along with faculties, hold the public trust in governing colleges and universities. Today academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance are widely accepted by organizations representing university professors (the AAUP), university presidents (the American Council on Education), and boards of trustees (the Association of Governing Boards). Moreover, they are now supported by a strong infrastructure throughout the academy—including supportive statements by national associations, institutional policies and practices, faculty handbooks, procedures for investigating alleged violations, and appeal processes—and they enjoy at least partial support from the courts.

But today, these traditional concepts face at least three serious challenges. First, many faculty members do not know about the academic profession’s social contract and these interrelated concepts, and new faculty are not taught about them during their graduate preparation. Therefore, faculty members cannot knowledgeably explain, apply, and defend them to colleagues, governing boards, administrators, and the public. Second, the academy has changed dramatically since the concepts were devised, and campus leaders have learned that the concepts do not always translate easily to practice. Third, faculty members and their authority have been under attack by several groups who want to substitute the authority of trustees, senior administrators, donors, parents, and students for the knowledge and expertise of faculty in making academic decisions.

1. The influential Statement of Principles of Academic Freedom and Tenure was developed jointly by the American Association of University Professors and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (then the Association of American Colleges) in 1940.
Therefore, it is time for a fresh look at and critical analysis of the profession’s social contract, particularly with regard to the correlative duties of academic freedom and other responsibilities, which we refer to as faculty professionalism. With our two related essays, we seek to start a new national conversation about the fundamental concepts of the profession’s social contract in what has become a “new academy.”

Hamilton, a lawyer with a long history as a scholar of academic and legal ethics and a leader in both the AAUP and the legal profession, explains the rationale behind the three concepts and compares them with similar concepts, particularly the importance of the correlative duties attached to rights or “professionalism” supporting autonomy in the work of other peer-review professions, such as medicine, law, and accounting. He reaffirms the concepts as central to the academic profession and asserts that academic leaders must do a much better job of educating future professors—as well as university trustees, administrators, and the general public—about their centrality to the effective education of students and the conduct of research.

Gaff, an innovative educator and national leader of undergraduate education, reaffirms the importance of these concepts and points out the ways academics have fallen short in implementing them. He asserts that it is necessary to reconsider each of them in light of major changes in higher education, and suggests specific directions for adapting the traditional concepts to new realities and improving their functioning.

We hope to stimulate thought, critical analysis, and discussion among all who care about a vibrant academy, including leaders in institutions of higher learning, educational associations, disciplinary societies, accreditation agencies, state coordinating boards, and other groups that support the faculty—and other professionals—who educate students, advance knowledge, and promote professionalism throughout the academy.

We realize the danger of critiquing what have come to be sacred values of the academic profession—academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. It would be almost unthinkable for a young or even middle-aged academic to write these essays; that act might jeopardize his or her career. But as neither of us—one retired, and the other approaching that stage—has much to lose, we are free to raise fundamental issues and to point out when the “emperor has no clothes.” Our hope is that by reaffirming traditional standards and by suggesting directions for improvement we can help revitalize the academic profession’s social contract. As long-term professors, academic administrators, and supporters of faculty members and the profession, we view these essays as a friendly critique that hopefully will contribute to the preservation and strengthening of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance in the years ahead.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of friends and colleagues who have read and commented on earlier drafts of these essays. They include Peter Ewell, Adrianna Kezar, Kenneth Mortimer, Bridget Puzon, R. Eugene Rice, Carol Geary Schneider, and David Tritelli. Each has added to this final product, although only we two authors bear ultimate responsibility for what became of their good thoughts.

Neil W. Hamilton and Jerry G. Gaff
Introduction

In recent decades, a combination of market changes and failures of the professions to respond proactively to them has led to an ongoing renegotiation of the social contracts of the peer-review professions (e.g., medicine, law, the professoriate, and accounting). The social contract of each profession is the tacit agreement between society and members of the profession that regulates their relationship with each other, in particular the profession’s control over professional work.

Members of each peer-review profession and their professional organizations carry an ongoing burden to justify to the public (and to those who represent the public, such as boards of trustees and senior academic management) why the profession deserves special rights of control over its work different from the control that society and employers exercise over other occupations. Carrying this burden of justification is particularly critical in times of rapid market change. For example, the current recession is a time of great market pressure on higher education when decreasing state budgets and endowments mean that expenditures must be cut. To maintain its control over professional work, the professoriate should be offering an aggressive defense of the public benefits derived from the academic profession’s social contract. A robust defense is also necessary if ethical failures by individual professionals become widely known and undermine public trust in the profession’s social contract.

This essay’s central argument is that members of a peer-review profession cannot aggressively justify and defend their control over professional work when they do not understand the social contract and their duties under it. The continuing failure of the academic profession adequately to socialize its members has resulted in a steady erosion of the profession’s rights of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. The profession at each college and university must address this failure.

Part I of this essay outlines the specific areas where boards and academic management are renegotiating the profession’s social contract. Part II develops further the concept of the social contract of peer-review professions generally and how these social contracts that create occupational control over work in a market economy must be constantly justified as being in the public good. Part II then analyzes the particular elements of the academic profession’s social contract: academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance, with all three elements supported by the concept of faculty professionalism. Part III explores whether the academic profession can defend academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. Part III also raises a series of questions that the professoriate at each institution

---

1. This essay uses the term “peer review” in its broad meaning of societal deference to peer oversight of the competence and ethics of professional work. Peer review of scholarship in the academic profession is one example.
should ask and answer. The essay concludes with suggestions about what faculty members can and should do to protect academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance.

I. Renegotiating the Academic Profession’s Social Contract

Significant segments of the academic profession, particularly those employed at institutions with a limited research mission, are not defending the social contract successfully and are losing the professional independence and control over work that members of the profession have traditionally enjoyed—in individually through academic freedom and collectively through peer review and shared governance. The governing boards and administrative leadership at these colleges and universities are moving dramatically toward the employment of both part-time faculty and full-time non-tenure-track faculty. These governing boards and administrators are fundamentally limiting the profession’s control over professional work (Rhoades 1998).

U.S. Department of Education data on trends in faculty status for all degree-granting institutions show that, from 1975 to 2005, the proportion of tenure-track faculty (both tenured and untenured) fell from 57 percent of all faculty to only 32 percent. Part-time faculty increased from 30 to 48 percent of all faculty, and full-time non-tenure-track faculty increased from 13 to 20 percent of all faculty (American Association of University Professors). The data indicate these trends are accelerating. In 2003, 59 percent of all newly hired full-time faculty held in non-tenure-track positions (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). Many governing boards and senior administrators have concluded that changing market conditions call for more flexibility in the terms of faculty employment and have undertaken a sweeping reconfiguration of academic appointments away from tenure-track positions. Two-year institutions are now staffed largely by part-time faculty, and many four-year institutions are moving toward having a majority of full-time non-tenure-track appointments (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006).

Contingent positions—defined as part-time and full-time non-tenure-track appointments—not only provide significantly less professional autonomy to individual faculty members, but also reduce the professional autonomy of the faculty as a group. Turnover among contingent faculty is high. They receive little or no commitment from their employing institutions and must accept heavy teaching or research support loads. At the same time, they get scant collegial support from their tenured colleagues, and they are much more vulnerable to coercion from students, full-time faculty colleagues, administrative leaders, and forces outside the university. Because they have little or no opportunity to be involved in peer review or shared governance, their remaining full-time tenured colleagues must shoulder heavier burdens (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). When the number of full-time tenured faculty members falls below a critical mass at a particular institution, effective peer review practices (including protection of academic freedom) and shared governance are undermined and may be impossible to carry out effectively.
While empirical research measuring the impact of contingent faculty on student learning and faculty teaching is at an early stage, recent studies find that:

- increased use of part-time faculty members has a negative relationship with continuing student enrollment and graduation rates (Jaeger 2008);
- compared to their full-time peers (whether tenure track or tenure ineligible), part-time faculty use active and collaborative techniques less frequently, spend less time preparing for classes, and interact less frequently with students (Umbach 2007, 2008);
- the proportion of part-time faculty has an effect on the commitment of all faculty on campus, regardless of appointment type: with every standard deviation increase of part-time faculty on campus, the average time spent preparing for class by all faculty drops 0.09 standard deviations, and the average time spent advising students drops 0.07 standard deviations (Umbach 2008).

In this same period of substantial increases in the proportion of contingent faculty, the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB) argued in its 1999 Statement of Institutional Governance that, with the exception of internal governance, much has changed in higher education in terms of market realities. The thrust of the new AGB position is to renegotiate the academic profession’s social contract in order to reduce the profession’s control over its work. The AGB position boils down to two main principles: (1) colleges and universities have many of the same characteristics as nonprofit business enterprises operating in highly competitive environments and should be managed more like other nonprofits, and (2) while historically governance of higher education has included three principal stakeholders—the governing board, the administrative leadership, and the full-time faculty—governing boards should move toward making the full-time faculty into one internal stakeholder with which to consult, together with nonacademic staff, students, and contingent faculty. The AGB statement mentions academic freedom once only peripherally and creates a template for institutional governance based on the assumption that the college or university has a limited or no knowledge-creation mission.

At a significant swath of institutions, the academic profession’s defense of the social contract has focused on rights and job security and has failed to change these trends. As Eliot Freidson has observed (2001, 3), when the peer-review professions defend their social contracts, they typically rely on a rhetoric of rights, job security, and “good intentions[,] which [are] belied by the patently self-interested character of many of their activities. What they almost never do is spell out the principles underlying the institutions that organize and support the way they do their work and take active responsibility for [the realization of the principles].” They do not undertake responsibility for assuring the quality of their members’ work. The academic profession’s anemic defense of its social contract, discussed below, confirms Freidson’s observation.
II. The Academic Profession’s Renegotiated Social Contract in Historical Context

The Social Contract of the Peer-Review Professions
In a market economy, the strong presumption is that an optimal outcome maximizing the public good is a competitive market with the management of each enterprise controlling the work of employees to provide the services consumers most prefer at the lowest cost. Exceptions where employees control the work to serve the public good must be constantly and persuasively justified as providing a greater benefit to the public than the market competition model.

Since the late 1800s, the peer-review professions in the United States, including the academic profession, have gradually worked out stable social contracts with the public in both custom and law that create significant exceptions to the usual employer control over work in the market-competition model. The public grants a profession[2] the autonomy to regulate itself through peer review, meaning that the profession's members (1) substantially control entry into the profession—including qualifying credentials and the necessary university education, which is influenced by the profession—as well as continued membership and upward mobility in the profession, and (2) set standards for how individual professionals perform their work. In return, each member of the profession and the profession as a whole agree to meet certain correlative duties to the public: (1) maintain high standards of minimum competence and ethical conduct to serve the public purpose of the profession and discipline those who fail to meet these standards, (2) promote and foster the core values and ideals of the profession, and (3) restrain self-interest to some degree in order to serve the public purpose of the profession.

A peer-review profession’s ability to regulate itself translates into substantial autonomy in and control over work for individual professionals. Peers practicing in the profession understand the complexity of the practice and protect a wide range of “judgment calls” as competent and ethical within the tradition of each profession. In addition, in the case of the academic profession, a scholar’s work questioning existing orthodoxy requires a high degree of autonomy. Independent professional judgment is a core value of the profession.

Eliot Freidson (2001) defines “professionalism” as an alternative ideology for the organization of work in contrast to the dominant market-competition ideology that assumes rational and fully informed consumers whose preferences are met by competition among producing firms resulting in lowest-cost services. In the dominant market-competition ideology, consumer preferences direct what is produced, and the management of producers directs workers on how to meet consumer preferences most efficiently. In the ideology of professionalism, the public grants members of an occupation control over their work because the particular tasks they perform involve transcendent values and are so different from those of most workers that occupational control of work is essential.

---

2. Peers in the practice distinguish understandable or “honest” mistakes from mistakes caused by gross negligence or willful indifference. Professional judgment requires the exercise of discretion under conditions of substantial uncertainty, and peers protect the autonomy to make honest mistakes. Peer review looks closely at the quality of the process through which the professional exercised professional judgment.
Freidson defines an ideal institutional professionalism that includes a major precondition for and three central elements of the social contract of a peer-review profession. A major precondition for such a social contract is public acceptance that the profession's work contributes to a transcendent public good and is grounded in a body of theoretically based specialized knowledge requiring a high degree of discretion and also that the work requires credentials conferred by higher education. The three central elements of Freidson's ideal institutional professionalism are part of the social contract itself: (1) the public's grant of significant control over the work to the profession, including qualifying credentials for entry, continuing membership, and career mobility; (2) the public's grant of exclusive jurisdiction over the division of labor in employment to the profession—ideally incorporated into and protected by law; and (3) the reciprocal promise of the profession and each member to restrain self-interest to some degree in order to serve the public good in the area of the profession's responsibility.3

While Freidson uses “professionalism” to mean “a set of institutions which permit the members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work” (2001, 17), this essay uses “social contract” to describe and analyze the same institutional elements examined by Freidson. This essay uses the word “professionalism” in its common meaning to describe the aspirations, conduct, and qualities that mark a professional person. The term “professionalism” describes the important elements of an ethical professional identity into which each peer-review profession should socialize students and practicing professionals. These elements of an ethical professional identity capture the correlative duties of the profession's social contract for each individual professional and for the relevant peer-review groups of professionals.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's recent book Educating Lawyers: Preparations for the Practice of Law uses "social contract" in the meaning used here and also emphasizes “how this social contract shapes—and makes distinctive—professional education. Across the otherwise disparate-seeming educational experiences of seminary, medical school, nursing school, engineering school, and law school, [the Carnegie Foundation] identified a common goal: professional education aims to initiate novice practitioners to think, to perform, and to conduct themselves (that is, to act morally and ethically) like professionals” (Sullivan et al. 2007, 21–22). In both Educating Lawyers and Educating Clergy (Foster et al. 2006), the Carnegie Foundation identifies three apprenticeships necessary for entry and advancement in all peer-review professions: (1) the cognitive or intellectual apprenticeship of the profession's unique analytical skill applied to the profession's doctrinal knowledge; (2) the practical apprenticeship of the other skills necessary for professional life; and (3) an apprenticeship of professional identity formation. The apprenticeship of formation into an ethical professional identity is professionalism in the meaning used here.

3. In addition to the reciprocal promise to restrain self-interest, there are other correlative duties a peer-review profession undertakes under the social contract (mentioned earlier in this essay) that Freidson does not discuss. In return for significant occupational control over work, the social contract requires each member of the profession and the relevant professional peer groups to maintain high standards of minimum competence and ethical conduct, discipline those who fail to meet the standards, promote and foster the core values and ideals of the profession, and educate and truthfully inform the public on an ongoing basis about how the profession is carrying out these responsibilities.
While referring to the "profession of the scholar," the Carnegie Foundation’s recent study of doctoral education, *The Formation of Scholars* (Walker et al. 2008), does not discuss the social contract for scholars. The book emphasizes that doctoral education is a complex process of “formation,” a term borrowed from Carnegie’s study of the clergy, and argues that apprenticeship is the signature pedagogy of doctoral education. The book does not explicitly use the analytical structure and terms for the three apprenticeships (like cognitive apprenticeship) that are central to Carnegie’s analysis of the other peer-review professions. *The Formation of Scholars* does refer generally to the importance of the analytical skill unique to a field—thinking like a mathematician, for example—and the other practical skills necessary for a scholar’s work, but these are not the organizing principles of this book. *The Formation of Scholars* refers to professional identity, but without a clear definition of an ethical professional identity other than being a steward who has an understanding of the moral obligations of the profession and a leader with good leadership skills both inside and outside the walls of the university.4

The important elements of an ethical professional identity are similar across the peer-review professions (Hamilton 2008). Personal conscience—that is, awareness of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one’s own intentions and conduct together with a feeling of obligation to be and to do what is morally good—is the foundation on which each member of a peer-review profession builds an ethical professional identity. Professional education engages students and practicing professionals over a career to develop personal conscience in a professional context. Personal conscience in a professional context requires each professional to internalize (1) the ethics of duty—the minimum standards of professional skill and ethical conduct below which the profession will impose discipline; (2) the ethics of aspiration—the core values and ideals of the profession;4 (3) the peer-review duty both to hold other members of the profession accountable for meeting the minimum standards of the profession and to encourage them to realize the core values and ideals of the profession; and (4) the concept of fiduciary duty where the professional’s self-interest is overbalanced by devotion to the person served and the public good in the profession’s area of responsibility.

There is some early research on how students and practicing professionals move through stages of professional identity formation. The process of understanding and internalizing the principles of professionalism may occur over an extended period of professional life—perhaps over the entire professional career of individuals who continually engage in the reflective practice of their craft. The critical lesson from this research for the academic profession is that new entrants into a profession tend strongly toward early-stage understanding of professional identity, but intentional efforts at socialization foster growth in ethical professional identity for many new entrants.

Adapting Robert Kegan’s theory of the development of the self to focus on how new professionals form a professional identity, James T. Rule and Muriel J. Bebeau (2005, 173–4) explain the three most common stages of a professional’s identity development:6

---

4. Stewardship is defined as taking moral responsibility for the continued health of the discipline and the preservation of the best of the past for those who will follow.

5. The correlative duty of peer review depends far more on informal communication to peers concerning expectations and areas for improvement to create an ethical culture than on formal complaints and procedures.

6. Stage one in Kegan’s original framework is the child’s impulsive stage constrained by the parenting culture.
Stage 2, The Independent Operator: Professionals at this stage “look at themselves and the world in terms of individual interests (for example, their own, their employer’s, others’) and in terms of concrete, black-and-white role expectations. Personal success is paramount and is measured by concrete accomplishments of individually valued goals and the enactment of specific role behaviors.” A stage 2 professional is likely to conform to professional ethical codes and standards in order to garner rewards and avoid punishment. “As one stage 2 aspiring professional put it, ‘there are professional guidelines and codes that shape your life.’”

Stage 3, The Team-Oriented Idealist: For stage 3 professionals, “individual interests are no longer central to how they define themselves. Stage 3 individuals look at themselves and the world in terms of shared values, mutual expectations, and identification with institutional ideals and people. . . . Rather than seeing professionalism as enacting certain specific behaviors or fixed roles (the stage 2 view), stage 3 individuals see professionalism as meeting the expectations of those who are more knowledgeable, more legitimate, and more professional. As one stage 3 professional remarked, ‘we must always hold ourselves to the highest expectations of society.’”

Stage 4, The Self-Defining Professional: While a stage 3 professional is embedded in a collective identity defined by the most respected members of the profession, a stage 4 professional has forged a personal system of values and internal processes for evaluating the collective identity. “The self-system of the stage 4 individual provides an internal compass for negotiating and resolving tensions among these multiple, shared expectations. Conflicts among the inevitable competing pulls of various roles and their attendant obligations are negotiated by adherence to one’s own internal standards and values.” When confronted with a moral dilemma, a self-authoring stage 4 professional, after reflection, says, “this is who I am and what I stand for.”

Using interviews, psychologists George B. Forsythe, Scott Snook, Philip Lewis, and Paul T. Bartone (2005) studied the professional identity development of U.S. Military Academy cadets. Table 1 below indicates that although entering students are principally in transition to stage 3, graduating students are principally at stage 3 or in transition to stage 4.

Forsythe and his colleagues compare these cadet data to findings from similar studies of midcareer and senior officers showing continuing development toward an internalized professional identity. They conclude that the data indicate “a pattern of continued development toward a principle-centered, self-authored understanding of officer professionalism” over the course of a career (2005, 206). This study of cadets and practicing professionals provides evidence to support Kegan’s theory that professional

**Table 1: USMA Developmental Level Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 2</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSITION TO 3</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 3</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSITION TO 4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STAGE 4</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Forsythe et al. 2005
identity development is a lifelong process. The authors recommend a more intentional educational engagement, as the Military Academy is attempting to do, to foster professional identity formation.

Making similar findings about the developmental stage of students entering professional school, Susan Roehrich and Muriel Bebeau (2005) coded essays written by students entering dental school in order to assess the students’ conception of professional expectations. Of forty-six students, 13 percent were at stage 2, 70 percent were in transition from stage 2 to stage 3, 7 percent were at stage 3, and 7 percent were in transition from stage 3 to stage 4. Based on their study of dentists whom peers identified as exemplars of professionalism, Rule and Bebeau conclude “there is plenty of evidence that aspiring professionals do not intuit the values of their profession or learn them by osmosis. They need to be explicitly taught. . . . Lessons from our exemplars suggest that students would benefit from opportunities to reflect on their goals, their values, and the role that models (both positive and negative) play in their development. The job of educators is to facilitate self-assessment and reflection, tied to explicit and public criteria” (164).

The studies discussed above raise the question of whether the academic profession is fostering continuing development toward an internalized ethical professional identity over a career. An internalized professional identity equips members of the profession aggressively to justify and defend the profession’s social contract.

The Burden to Justify Occupational Control

It bears repeated emphasis that, in a market economy, the strong presumption is that an optimal outcome maximizing the public good is a competitive market with management of each enterprise controlling work to provide the services that consumers prefer at the lowest cost. The burden is on the peer-review professions to justify constantly why occupational control of the work serves the public good. When the public does not understand how it benefits because of (1) changing market conditions undermining the precondition for the social contract for part or all of the profession, (2) failures of professionalism that undermine the public’s trust in the social contract, or (3) failures of the profession to educate the public regarding the benefits of the social contract, the public renegotiates the social contract toward a typical market relationship of consumer/service provider or employer/employee. The latter two reasons are failures of the profession itself.

However, the social contracts of the peer-review professions are premised on the public’s trust that a profession and its individual members are serious about professionalism. High degrees of professionalism and robust education of the public, the governing board, and academic management build confidence in the social contract. Failures of professionalism and failures to educate undermine the social contract. These social contracts are always subject to renegotiation. In the corporate scandals of the early 2000s after the failure of the accounting profession to fulfill its social contract as an effective gatekeeper exercising independent judgment to protect the public (particularly Arthur Andersen in the Enron debacle),

7. Jordan Cohen, president of the Association of American Medical Colleges, makes the same argument for his profession: “Why is it important to maintain the medical profession’s implicit social contract with society? For it is professionalism that is the medium through which individual physicians fulfill the lofty expectations that society has of medicine. If norms of physician behavior fall short of the responsibilities called for by medical professionalism, both presumed signatories to the social contract—the profession and the public—are destined to suffer irreparable harm” (2006, v).
the public, acting through Congress with the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, redesigned the accounting profession’s social contract to reduce significantly the profession’s peer-review authority and autonomy. The same legislation and subsequent Securities and Exchange Commission regulations sent a shot across the bow of the legal profession by substituting legislation and federal regulation requiring “up the ladder” reporting for what had been the profession’s own standard. Similarly, many physicians also have experienced significant renegotiation of their social contract toward less control over their work, less autonomy, and more reporting and oversight (Freidson 2001). This is the result of fundamental market changes in third-party payment for health care, the rapid growth of managed care organizations, and dramatic growth in advanced technology and specialized knowledge requiring large capital investment, combined with deep public concern over errors causing patient injury and the failure of the medical profession aggressively to defend the social contract.

The Academic Profession’s Social Contract

The social contract of the academic profession is stated in the 1915 Declaration of Principles of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP):

It is conceivable that our profession may prove unworthy of its high calling, and unfit to exercise the responsibilities that belong to it. . . . And the existence of this Association . . . must be construed as a pledge, not only that the profession will earnestly guard those liberties without which it cannot rightly render its distinctive and indispensable service to society, but also that it will with equal earnestness seek to maintain such standards of professional character, and of scientific integrity and competency, as shall make it a fit instrument for that service. (2006, 291)

The profession’s “high calling,” the transcendent public good it serves, is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. This is the same transcendent public purpose served by the colleges and universities in our society. University or college boards of trustees or regents represent society with respect to the social contract between society and the academic profession to serve this public purpose. The AAUP’s 1915 declaration states that the boards are in a position of public “trust” to represent the public’s interest in realizing the knowledge creation and dissemination mission of the university.

In the context of the academic profession, the concept of academic freedom and the central role of peer review and shared governance with respect to academic freedom represent the occupational control over work and the professional autonomy granted by the social contract. As the American tradition of academic freedom evolved over the course of the past century, boards have acknowledged the importance of freedom of inquiry and speech to the university’s and the academic profession’s transcendent public-good mission of creating and disseminating knowledge. Dissemination of knowledge in this tradition involves a special kind of teaching that is closely related to knowledge creation and different from teaching in secondary schools. Eric Ashby (1968) calls this teaching the discipline of dissent within the context of a discipline. Other scholars use “deep

---

8. The teaching of the discipline of dissent requires the student to become familiar with what is already known about a subject and how to question that orthodoxy. This discipline develops in the student (1) an understanding of the principles in a discipline, (2) critical analytical ability, and (3) an understanding of the methods for resolving disputes within and among the disciplines. It may be, Ashby concedes, that many university students never get further than becoming familiar with orthodoxy, but “what is important is that university graduates should have watched their teacher exercising this attitude of skepticism [the discipline of dissent] toward the traditional and orthodox view” (Ashby 1968, 65). The AAUP statement On the Relationship of Faculty Governance to Academic Freedom provides that “good teaching requires developing a critical ability in one’s students and an understanding of the methods for resolving disputes within the discipline” (2006, 142).
learning” to describe this type of teaching.\footnote{“Teacher-scholars are also expected to promote deep approaches to learning through activities that encourage students to process information in ways that help them make qualitative distinctions about the merits of data-based claims or the persuasiveness of logic-based arguments” (Kuh, Chen, and Nelson Laird 2007, 40).} In its statement on Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2006) affirms that liberal education helps students develop skills of critical inquiry and analysis with particular emphasis on the careful evaluation of assumptions, arguments, and evidence in the context of well-grounded intellectual criteria and the analytical skill of a discipline. Knowledge creation and teaching critical inquiry and analysis lead to public acceptance that the profession’s work both contributes to a transcendental public good and is grounded in a body of theoretically based knowledge requiring a high degree of discretion. This is a precondition for the profession’s social contract.

Accordingly, governing boards and academic management have historically granted rights of exceptional vocational freedom of speech to professors in research, teaching, and extramural utterance without lay interference on two conditions. The first condition is that individual professors meet correlative duties of professional competence and ethical conduct, and the second is that the faculty of the institution, as a collegial body, assumes the duty of peer review to enforce the obligations to be met by individual professors. This tradition of faculty autonomy and board deference to the peer review of professional competence and ethical conduct is the linchpin of academic freedom in the United States.

Early AAUP leaders accepted the legal and political impregnability of university charters and employment law that dictated lay, not faculty, control. They proposed the idea of administrative restraint. In the 1915 AAUP Declaration of Principles, they call for faculty participation in the prosecutorial and judicial processes of the university relating to faculty and students. This is the concept of peer review through academic due process.

The mechanics of this tradition of peer review and shared governance have been a subject of continuing negotiation between university employers and the academic profession. Unlike the social contract of the legal and medical professions, where the state to some degree protects the profession’s autonomy through licensing requirements created by law, the academic profession’s control of entry and the division of labor is not protected by statute or regulation. The academic profession’s social contract with the governing boards is thus less sheltered and more subject to renegotiation than those of the legal and medical professions.

In actual practice, the academic profession has chosen to negotiate principally for tenure to protect academic freedom.\footnote{The argument that First Amendment protection by courts makes unnecessary other protection for academic freedom is incorrect. Among other reasons, First Amendment protection extends only to professors employed at public universities (see Hamilton 2002; Finkin and Post 2008).} A tenure system requires some probationary period where a professor seeking continued employment carries the burden of demonstrating excellence in teaching, research, and service in an evaluation process relying principally on peer review. Successful candidates receive tenure, subsequent to which the burden shifts to the administration to prove to a peer committee through academic due process that a professor has failed to meet the correlative duties of competence or ethical conduct and thus merits employment sanctions. The administration generally must prove...
a violation of duty by clear and convincing evidence. Given the size of the tenured professoriate, there are relatively few tenure termination cases each year (even including those that are negotiated terminations).

Tenure offers the benefit of very strong peer-review protection for the academic freedom of one group of faculty, but the benefits must be balanced against tenure’s costs. One cost of a focus on tenure to protect academic freedom is that the academic freedom of both contingent faculty and tenure-track faculty may not be adequately protected. Tenured faculty frequently seem inattentive to the academic freedom concerns of contingent or tenure-track faculty. A second cost of tenure is that once tenure is granted, the intensity of peer review diminishes dramatically, and, in general, faculty members hold each other accountable post-tenure for only the most egregious violations of duty. Job security and self-interest concerns undermine effective peer review (Hamilton 2007). Tenured faculty sometimes defend job security under the flag of academic freedom even when the institution is clearly making programmatic changes to respond to the market and there is no evidence of suppression of ideas. Post-tenure review is a fairly recent trend to create more effective peer review after tenure.

Whatever the benefits and costs of the procedural protections of tenure as the principal means to protect academic freedom, tenured status historically (in contrast to contingent faculty status) has tended to come with sufficiently reasonable teaching and research loads so that tenured faculty have time to contribute effectively to peer review and shared governance. If the tenured faculty in fact carries out the duties of faculty professionalism outlined below, tenure remains the best of the available options to realize an institutional mission that emphasizes knowledge creation and teaching critical inquiry and analysis. Tenured faculty must focus also on the protection of academic freedom for contingent and other untenured faculty. An alternative is to rely on a faculty committee that gives peer review to all faculty complaints concerning academic freedom and has the authority to grant redress in the appropriate cases.

With respect to decisions on matters other than continued faculty status, later AAUP documents softened the idea of board legal control into a concept of shared governance in decision making. While it concedes that the governing board is by law the final institutional authority, the concept of shared governance urges that the missions of the university and the academic profession are best realized by granting varying degrees of deference to faculty decisions, depending on how closely a faculty decision relates to the faculty’s expert disciplinary knowledge concerning teaching and research. The faculty deserves maximum deference on core academic issues such as appointments, promotion and tenure, and the curriculum. Both peer review and shared governance are embedded in an earned deference tradition.

“Faculty professionalism” defines the ethical duties required by the social contract for each professor as well as for relevant groups of professional peers. The greater the faculty’s professionalism, the greater the deference the faculty merits. The following five principles of faculty professionalism capture the correlative duties of academic freedom, including a faculty member’s contributions to peer review and shared governance (Hamilton 2007, 2008). For a professor, an ethical professional identity is constituted by the following five principles of professionalism:

1. Each professor should, over a career, grow in personal conscience in the professional context of the following four principles of professionalism in carrying out the duties of the profession.
2. Each professor agrees to meet the ethics of duty—the minimum standards of competence and ethical conduct set by peers within both the profession and discipline and within the university (including attending to the stated mission of the institution).\textsuperscript{11}

3. Each professor should strive, over a career, to realize the ethics of aspiration—the ideals and core values of the academic profession, the professor’s discipline, and the professor’s institution including internalizing the highest standards for professional skills.

4. Each professor agrees to act as a fiduciary (with the corresponding duty to avoid conflicts of interest) where his or her self-interest is overbalanced by devotion to serving both the students through teaching and the advancement of knowledge through scholarship.\textsuperscript{12}

5. Each professor and the members of the faculty as a collegial body agree to (a) hold each other accountable to meet the minimum standards of the profession, the discipline, and their institution and (b) to encourage each other to realize the ideals and core values of all three.

In the academic profession, the tenured faculty, in particular, has the obligation to foster the development of an ethical professional identity in graduate students going into teaching, new faculty members, including contingent faculty, and veteran faculty. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s studies of fostering an ethical professional identity in the other peer-review professions (clergy, lawyers, physicians, nurses, and engineers) provide a great deal of useful guidance on how to engage professionals in this type of education. *The Formation of Scholars*, which is focused on doctoral education, does not touch on personal conscience, the ethics of duty (except for some discussion of competence), or the ethics of aspiration for the profession of a scholar, but it does address the importance of ethical peer cultures, restraint of self-interest, and service.

### III. Can the Academic Profession Defend Academic Freedom, Peer Review, and Shared Governance?

#### Inadequate Acculturation Regarding the Correlative Duties of the Social Contract

The reality is that the vast majority of the professoriate receives virtually no formal education on the ethics of the profession. We assume that an osmosis-like diffusion in the apprenticeship model will transmit the principles of the social contract, academic freedom, peer review, shared governance, and faculty professionalism from one generation to the next. Yet the available evidence indicates that, for the vast majority of students, virtually no time is spent in graduate study on professional ethics (Brown and Kalichman 1998; Hamilton 2006, 2007).

\textsuperscript{11} By acceptance of employment at a particular institution, a professor agrees to attend to the institution’s mission. In the event of conflicts among the duties to the profession, the discipline, and the institution, those articulated by the institution are normally the only legally enforceable duties (the institution would normally incorporate by reference those duties required by federal and state law into the institution’s rules). However, a professor should aspire to the highest ideals and core values of the profession, the discipline, and the institution, and should seek to fulfill whichever duties are the highest.

\textsuperscript{12} Implicit in a professor’s fiduciary duty is a continuing reflective engagement, over a career, on how much private advantage in work is appropriate in light of the five principles of professionalism. Private advantage includes, for example, excessive emphasis on income through consulting, slacking conduct in terms of failure to work a professional workweek, and shirking conduct in terms of a failure to undertake a fair proportion of the shared governance duties.
Currently, there are only three national, multi-institutional socialization initiatives. As of this writing, I am not aware of any survey of individual institutions reporting initiatives on socialization concerning some or all of the principles of professionalism. Two major national initiatives are the response of universities to (1) federal mandates that require institutions receiving federal research funds to bear primary responsibility for the prevention of research misconduct and (2) the National Institutes of Health training grant requirement that universities provide instruction in the responsible conduct of research (RCR) to training grant recipients. With respect to the first initiative, the Public Health Service's current policies on research misconduct require institutions to “foster a research environment that promotes the responsible conduct of research, research training, and activities related to that research or research training, discourages research misconduct, and deals promptly with allegations or evidence of possible research misconduct” (Public Health Service 2005, 28388).

The mission of the federal government’s Office of Research Integrity (ORI) includes a focus on educational programs to prevent misconduct and promote the responsible conduct of research. ORI is encouraging and funding efforts by disciplinary societies and universities to develop educational programs that engage faculty members on research ethics. Many universities make available RCR training materials, and some require RCR training for researchers. The focus has been on medical and biological sciences, with a growing interest in social and behavioral sciences.

Although they constitute a major faculty professionalism effort, these initiatives emphasize research ethics in the sciences, not in all the disciplines of the university. The initiatives do not deal with broader issues of academic ethics in terms of teaching, service, shared governance, or intramural and extramural utterance other than teaching and research, and they appear to lean toward the ethics of duty, rather than the ethics of aspiration and the other principles of professionalism.

In a third national initiative, from 1993 to 2003, the Association of American Colleges and Universities and the Council of Graduate Schools organized the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program. PFF provided doctoral students “with opportunities to observe and experience faculty responsibilities at a variety of academic institutions” (see www.preparing-faculty.org). The PFF programs addressed the full scope of faculty roles and responsibilities, including teaching, research, and service. The programs provided participating students with multiple mentors at different kinds of institutions who gave reflective feedback in all three areas. Implicit in understanding faculty roles and responsibilities, observing role models, and having mentors are many of the principles of faculty professionalism. However, only some PFF programs explicitly included faculty professionalism.

Between 1993 and 2003, approximately 295 universities and colleges participated in PFF, including both institution-wide and departmental programs. The principal funding for PFF ended in 2003. Although outside funding is no longer available to establish additional programs, most campus and disciplinary-society PFF programs persist, and some new PFF programs continue to develop using institutional funds. A major independent assessment of PFF in 2004 was very favorable, finding that both graduate student participants and senior faculty evaluating the participants thought that the program made the students more sophisticated about faculty roles, improved teaching skills in particular, and, to a lesser degree, improved research skills (Goldsmith et al. 2004). Over four thousand doctoral students enrolled in PFF during that decade, but this number is still a small fraction of all future faculty.
As of the year 2000, some of the professional disciplinary societies—approximately one-quarter to one-third—had adopted comprehensive, clear, and accessible codes of ethics. Some societies had codes of ethics addressing only selected ethical issues, and some essentially had not yet developed a code of ethics (Hamilton 2002). Of those disciplinary associations that did have a code of ethics, few knew if their codes were working. Mark Frankel, director of the Scientific Freedom, Responsibility, and Law program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) found the lack of knowledge about the impact of codes of ethics to be “one of the most striking aspects of the AAAS’s 1999–2000 survey of disciplinary societies’ codes of ethics” (Brainard 2000, A38). Although many of the disciplinary associations in the AAAS survey were willing to expend time, effort, and resources to promote research integrity through codes and activities, “they are not engaging in any systematic assessment of the effectiveness of their efforts” (Iverson, Frankel, and Siang 2003, 150).

In contrast to scholarship about the ethics of its sister peer-review professions, law and medicine, the professoriate tends not to examine its own ethics. Academic ethics is not a significant field of study, although the subfield of the responsible conduct of research is getting some attention. This general lack of attention to and complacency about the social contract and professionalism speaks volumes about the profession’s ability to maintain the public’s trust.

Four studies indicate widespread failure of either graduate students or faculty or both to understand the social contract, academic freedom, and the principles of faculty professionalism (Clark 1987; Golde and Dore 2001, 2004; McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino 2006; Swazey, Anderson and Louis 1993). One of these—a major study of two thousand faculty in chemistry, civil engineering, microbiology, and sociology—found that just 13 percent of the respondents judged that the faculty in their department exercised a great deal of shared responsibility for the conduct of their colleagues (Swazey, Louis, and Anderson 1994, B1). There are no studies making contrary findings.

The major studies of actual faculty misconduct in terms of violations of the principles of professionalism also indicate serious failures. Analyzing all research misconduct studies conducted through 2005, Nicholas Steneck concludes that the accumulated evidence “appears to put the level of occurrence for serious misconduct near 1 percent” of all research studies or articles by professors” (2006, 53). Steneck further concludes that the incidence of questionable research practices is higher (questionable practices violate traditional values of the research enterprise and may be detrimental to the research process). While nearly all of these studies focus on the sciences, there is no reason to believe that professional misconduct is less common in the social sciences, humanities, or professional fields. Indeed a survey of more than five thousand graduate students in 2002–04 found that while 56 percent of graduate business students admitted one or more incidents of significant cheating in the past academic year, 50 percent of graduate students in the physical sciences, 43 percent of graduate students in the social sciences, and 41 percent of graduate students in the humanities admitted one or more incidents of significant cheating in the past academic year (Hodgkinson, Anderson, and Louis 1993, A1).

---

In contrast to scholarship about the ethics of its sister peer-review professions, law and medicine, the professoriate tends not to examine its own ethics.

---

13. Steneck defines serious misconduct as involving fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism.
students in the arts, and 39 percent of graduate students in the social sciences and other humanities also admitted significant cheating (McCabe, Butterfield, and Trevino 2006).

If serious misconduct occurs in approximately 1 percent of research studies or articles and questionable research practices occur in a substantially higher proportion of studies and articles, then how serious is the problem? What if studies showed that in 1 percent of all litigation matters a lawyer committed serious misconduct (fabrication or falsification of evidence or theft of the client's money) or that in 1 percent of all patient matters physicians committed serious misconduct? There would be moral outrage—not to mention lawsuits—both within the profession and in society. The public would demand to know what the profession was doing to end the misconduct. If the answer were that the legal and medical professions were doing nothing in response to these levels of misconduct, the moral outrage would intensify.

The available data as a whole demonstrate that the osmosis-like diffusion of professional ethics on which much of the professoriate currently relies is a substantial failure in realizing a generational renewal of the social contract. The faculty at a great swath of institutions fail at acculturation that produces clear understandings of the social contract, academic freedom, peer review, shared governance, and faculty professionalism.

Critical Questions for Members of the Profession

The following questions can guide faculty members in assessing the effectiveness of the faculty's defense of academic freedom, peer review, shared governance, and faculty professionalism.

1. Does your institution have a mission satisfying the precondition for the academic profession's social contract to be applicable? Specifically, (a) does your institution have a significant knowledge-creation mission, and (b) does your institution have a significant mission of teaching critical inquiry, analytical reasoning, and evidence-based argument?

The degree to which an institution's mission emphasizes the transcendent public good of knowledge creation and of teaching critical inquiry and analysis determines whether the precondition for the academic profession's social contract is met. At one end of the spectrum, research universities and strong liberal arts colleges clearly meet the precondition for the social contract, and if the institution's faculty members take responsibility for the social contract's correlative duties, the board and the administrative leadership should strongly support academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. At the other end of the spectrum, an institution with no significant mission of research or teaching critical inquiry and analysis would not meet the precondition for the profession's social contract to be applicable. Faculty at this type of institution, at least in the public sector, could seek the economic protection of a union.

A number of colleges and universities fall in the middle between the research university or strong liberal arts college model and the vocational training or remedial high school model. For example, the institution may emphasize significant research or teaching critical inquiry and analysis only in some disciplines or programs, or the institution may have no knowledge-creation mission but does emphasize teaching critical inquiry and analysis. This essay does not analyze the question of whether a faculty member who does not engage in research subject to peer review in a discipline can effectively teach critical inquiry and analysis. Recent research indicates a positive relationship between the amount of time faculty spend on research, particularly research involving undergraduates, and the emphasis on deep learning in their courses (Kuh, Chen, and Nelson Laird 2007).

To the degree either research or teaching critical inquiry and analysis are not significant parts of an institution's mission, the faculty will find it increasingly difficult to carry its burden to demonstrate to the governing board, the administrative leadership, and the wider society that the precondition for the
profession’s social contract is met. If, for example, an institution has no knowledge-creation mission
and a limited mission to teach critical inquiry and analysis, it is difficult to identify a transcendent
public good its teachers are serving that is different from that of high school teachers. Without a
substantial reason to justify occupational control of the work by the professoriate, such an institution
may decide to manage its teachers in ways similar to the nonprofit organization model typical in a
competitive market. The institution may decide to employ an inadequate number of tenured faculty
to provide effective peer review and shared governance.

2. If the institution substantially meets the precondition for the academic profession’s social contract,
then to what degree has the tenured faculty been meeting its obligations under the social contract?
Specifically, is the tenured faculty
   » actively socializing new and veteran members into an ethical professional identity;
   » actively educating governing board members, the administrative leadership, and the public
     about the social contract and the faculty’s robust fulfillment of the correlative duties of the
     social contract;
   » actively creating a culture that fosters and supports high degrees of faculty professionalism;
   » actively assessing the effectiveness of the faculty’s socialization efforts and ethical culture
     efforts in terms of the professionalism of each faculty member;
   » actively assessing the effectiveness of the faculty’s protection of academic freedom for all
     faculty members;
   » actively assessing the effectiveness of the faculty’s peer review;
   » actively assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of the faculty’s shared governance;
   » actively improving the faculty’s efforts when assessment demonstrates inadequacies or failures?
If the answers to these questions are affirmative, then the tenured faculty is robustly carrying out its
duties under the social contract and is aggressively defending the social contract by undertaking the
ongoing education of the governing board, the administrative leadership, and the public generally. To
the degree that any of the answers are negative or significantly qualified, the tenured faculty can do
more to justify the faculty’s claims to occupational control over the work and professional autonomy.

Responding to a Decrease in the Proportion of Tenured Faculty
If an institution substantially meets the precondition for the academic profession’s social contract to
apply, then the tenured faculty should ask of themselves the following questions:
   » Looking at the last ten years, has the proportion of contingent faculty been increasing at your
     institution?
   » What is the critical mass of tenured faculty necessary to carry out effective peer review and
     shared governance, and does the increase in contingent faculty threaten this critical mass?
   » Has the tenured faculty actively been meeting its obligations under the social contract out-
     lined in question 2 above?
If the increasing proportion of contingent faculty is threatening the necessary critical mass of tenured
faculty, and the faculty is meeting its obligations under the social contract, then the tenured faculty
should actively and aggressively make the case to the governing board, the administrative leadership,
the alumni, the media, and the public generally that a critical mass of tenured faculty is essential to realize the institution’s mission.

Conclusion

The academic profession must not resign itself to the current trend toward contingent faculty, but it cannot reverse the trends toward a higher proportion of contingent faculty and less occupational control over professional work by employing a rhetoric of rights, job security, and good intentions. The profession at each institution carries an ongoing burden to justify the social contract’s special privileges of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance in comparison to the dominant market competition model in which employers control the work to meet consumer preferences at the lowest cost. The profession must continually demonstrate that the institution and society benefit when it has sufficient control over professional work and autonomy to realize the profession’s and the institution’s transcendent public purpose of creating knowledge and teaching critical inquiry and analysis. Based on informal surveys of undergraduates and their parents over many years of service in the academic profession, Annette Kolodny finds the general public—including undergraduate students and their parents—has little idea what academic freedom and tenure mean or how they might be related. She urges doing a better job of “educating our governing boards, as well as our state legislators and the general public, about the meaning and importance of protecting both tenure and academic freedom” (Kolodny 2008, 44).

Professors cannot defend the social contract without both having the knowledge necessary to make the defense and actively meeting their correlative duties under the social contract. The single most important step is improving the socialization of students and practicing academic professionals into the apprenticeship necessary for each of the peer-review professions—namely, the apprenticeship of ethical professional identity formation. This is a career-long engagement. A member of a peer-review profession cannot defend and cannot live what he or she does not understand. The success of the Preparing Future Faculty initiative provides a model for this type of socialization.15

If the academic profession at many institutions does not undertake these responsibilities, the trajectory for the academic profession for the next twenty years will, in all likelihood, look like the trajectory for the past thirty years. The profession will continue a slow transformation toward employment as technical experts subject to the dominant market model of employer control over work.

What is the loss to society if a substantial portion of the professoriate ultimately loses academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance (or major portions of these rights)? How would such a loss affect the quality of research and student learning of critical inquiry and analysis? It is very difficult to quantify the societal benefit of the increment in knowledge creation and teaching critical inquiry and analysis that would not

15. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s series of books on educating professionals as clergy, lawyers, physicians, nurses, and engineers provides outstanding resources on this type of educational engagement. The Formation of Scholars is also helpful.
otherwise occur were academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance less robust than under the
social contract as it presently exists at research universities. The best available (albeit flawed) evidence
may be the comparative academic strength of American universities in research compared to global
competitors. While the United States has only 5 percent of the world’s population, American research
universities dominate international ranking systems on academic excellence, constituting seven or eight
of the top ten research universities in the world. A reasonable hypothesis is that a robust social contract
fostering academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance contributes significantly to the aca-
demic excellence of these universities. More comparative research would be very helpful.

To my knowledge, the boards and administrators seeking to renegotiate the social contract argue
principally that market realities dictate more control over faculty similar to other occupations and
that faculty are not fulfilling their duties under the social contract. But they do not directly argue
that academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance are unimportant to achieve excellence in
research or teaching critical inquiry and analysis. The faculty must make the case for the importance
of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance.

While many in the profession believe the battle is against oppressive governing boards, admin-
istrators, and market forces, the battle is actually for the soul of the profession. Imagine a world in
which each professor at an institution had fully internalized all five elements of faculty profession-
ality. We are educators. From a position of knowledge and moral authority, not just self-interest, we
could then convince the public—and, most importantly, the governing boards and administrative
management, who are trustees for the public good of creating and disseminating knowledge—that
academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance best serve the institution’s mission.
Academic Freedom, Peer Review, and Shared Governance in the Face of New Realities

JERRY G. GAFF

This essay builds on Neil Hamilton’s preceding analysis of the rationale for and continued importance of three key elements of the social contract of the academic profession—academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance—as well as his discussion of faculty professionalism, a crucial concept that supports all three. The principles of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance were originally formulated nearly a century ago under very different conditions.

I begin here by arguing that a configuration of new realities presents significant challenges to these principles, and I then point to limitations of each in contemporary practice. Next, I suggest directions for change that I believe would lead to the more effective functioning of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance in the contemporary environment. It is beyond the scope of this essay either to develop specific alternatives or to devise legalistic language for implementing the suggestions. The devil may well be in the details, but the best way to begin is by recognizing the problems and articulating general principles and directions for change that, if warranted, may be taken to another level of detail by others. Finally, I conclude by making a plea for leadership primarily from faculty members, presidents and their administrations, and trustees (also with support from professional and citizen groups interested in the quality of higher education) to support academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance—not because they are “perks” for faculty members, but rather because they are inherent to the proper education of students as well as the conduct of research.

Given the dramatic changes in both society and the academy discussed in this essay, I believe that the academy—especially the faculty—needs to recommit to the principles of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. But if they are to remain as guiding principles in the future, the faculty, indeed the whole academy, must make adjustments in the ways they are put into practice. I share the sentiment of Jules LaPidas (1998, 95), late president of the Council of Graduate Schools, who quoted the words of novelist Giuseppe di Lampedusa describing inexorable and threatening change in a traditional culture: “If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.” Similarly, if we want to preserve the values embedded in academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance, then we must rethink these core academic concepts and adapt them to current conditions in the academy. It is time for university professors, university presidents (including their administrations), boards of trustees, and others who care about the future of higher education to step forward and revisit the core professional standards of the academy in order “to see things stay as they are.” If the academy does not make the appropriate changes, I fear that academic professionals will see their autonomy erode.

The reality is that it is not just faculty members who benefit from academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. These principles are essential to scholarly integrity and to providing students
a sound education. They exist because, as Hamilton explains, they are essential to the transcendent values of the education of students and the conduct of research with integrity; that is, they are essential for the fulfillment of the professoriate’s responsibility to the larger society. It is the responsibility of not only faculty members but also trustees, campus administrators, and the general public—anyone who cares for the future of higher education in America—to support academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance as well as to see that they actually function as effectively as possible in practice.

New Realities

Although observers may differ on how exactly higher education is changing or on the causes of change, various scholars have pointed to six distinct changes affecting faculty life. Taken together, these changes have implications for the professional standards of the professoriate.

1. The interplay of competition among institutions, markets, and technology. Colleges and universities have always competed with each other—for outstanding faculty, good students, cost, resources, favorable publicity, athletics, political support, and public goodwill. But in recent years competition has intensified, especially with the growth of for-profit institutions, corporate universities, and Internet institutions that supplement more traditional research universities, land-grant universities, state universities, community colleges, national liberal arts colleges, regional private institutions, and religious-affiliated institutions.

Driven by the growing importance of a college degree for a good middle-class life, students today are flocking to all kinds of colleges and universities; access to college education has become very important to students and their families. The cost of that education has risen and has become another key issue, and campus administrators have tried to contain faculty and staff costs by reducing full-time, tenured positions and substituting low-paid, adjunct positions without benefits. Or even better for this purpose, some have replaced flesh-and-blood faculty with virtual faculty through the use of technology. For whole programs, many institutions offer online courses and distance education. These cost-saving measures have eroded the economic stability and the professional authority of the faculty, and made them much more vulnerable to efforts that evade academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance.

Today, students increasingly study at more than one institution, as they take lower-cost courses at local community colleges or at other institutions that are conveniently located. When these students transfer their credits to secure a baccalaureate degree, how can officials ensure the comparability of the knowledge and skills acquired in courses at institutions with very different missions and educational programs? If one student takes a biology course that teaches evolution at a public university with a commitment to academic freedom, for example, and another student takes a biology course at an evangelical institution where creationism is believed and the concept of evolution is not sanctioned, are their courses comparable for transfer purposes?

The broad diversity of institutional types is a distinctive strength of higher education in the United States. But the academic missions of these diverse institutions can differ widely, and so too can the working conditions for faculty members. Yet the standards of academic freedom, peer
review, and shared governance were devised as a “one-size-fits-all” approach. How, for example, does (or should) shared governance vary (if at all) among a research-extensive university, a community college, an evangelical school, and an online institution? How can there be a “single seamless system” comprised of institutions with vastly different missions and expectations for both faculty and students? Should there be mission-driven forms of these standards?

2. **The centrality of students and their learning.** When I was a young faculty member, my colleagues and I were regaled by the apocryphal story of a senior professor who, when an administrator asked the faculty to support a university priority, proclaimed that “the university is the faculty.” The once-dominant role of faculty and traditional faculty values has been largely eclipsed by the ascendance of concern for students and their learning—a reversal of faculty dominance presaged by David Riesman in *On Higher Education: The Academic Enterprise in an Era of Rising Student Consumerism* (1980). In the memorable words of Barr and Tagg (1995), there has been a shift “from teaching to learning,” from what faculty do to what students learn.

This change was sealed when the regional accrediting bodies revised their requirements for institutional accreditation. It used to be that accreditation emphasized inputs and practices, such as resources, student ability, faculty preparation, and the quality of the educational program. But today, all six regional accrediting bodies require that institutions demonstrate the learning of their students. All six require that institutions specify student learning goals, operate programs that intentionally cultivate those goals, provide evidence from assessments that students are learning, and show how the evidence from assessments is used to improve the educational program.

3. **The changing assumptive framework.** By the 1960s, the faculty had become the dominant force in the American university; indeed, that was when “the faculty” was conflated with “the university.” In *The Academic Revolution* (1969), Jencks and Riesman articulated the then-dominant “assumptive world” of the professoriate, which they characterized as including the privileging of research and scholarship over teaching and other faculty roles, professional autonomy, academic quality defined through judgments by professional peers, the primacy of academic disciplines, career advancement through disciplinary societies, and the dominance of specialization.

As Eugene Rice (1991) has observed, during the last two decades this assumptive world has been challenged by a renewed emphasis on teaching and learning and by a host of innovations in undergraduate education. These innovations have often been led by faculty who value broader, more interdisciplinary and integrative education as well as more active, collaborative, and experiential learning by students. Faculty members are still experts and continue to play a guiding role for students, but their focus has shifted from individual performance to collaborations with students—and other faculty colleagues—that support richer learning. Rice contends that the old set of assumptions persists, especially at the leading universities, and that both newer and older visions of faculty responsibilities are currently found at most institutions.

4. **Contingent faculty.** In faculty hiring, there is a marked trend away from tenured or tenure-track appointments and toward contingent appointments—that is, part-time and full-time tenure-track appointments. The usual practice has been to reserve the privileges of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance for tenured and tenure-track faculty. But shouldn’t contingent faculty also be held to the highest standards of academic professionalism? We know that contingent faculty typically receive less institutional
support than full-time, tenured faculty. For instance, departments and institutions often do not orient new or part-time faculty well to the courses they teach, to their students and colleagues, or to the distinctive mission and values of the institution. Contingent faculty typically are not eligible for professional development funds for research or travel to professional meetings. Because adjunct faculty members—the largest group of contingent faculty—frequently are not fully integrated into their departments or institutions, they are marginalized. As Deborah DeZure (2003) asks, “what does it mean for the education of students that they are taking courses from ‘marginalized’ teachers?” Students deserve the best instruction from fully empowered instructors. Yet, as Benjamin (2003, 12) explains, “the increasing dependence on contingent appointments imperils undergraduate learning no less than it imperils the future of the academic profession.”

Further, as Rice (2006, 12) notes, the rise of a contingent faculty involves the “unbundling of faculty roles.” Whereas in the past each faculty member was expected to teach, conduct research, and engage in service, today faculty increasingly engage in only one or two of these activities. For instance, an adjunct instructor is hired to teach a particular course and is not expected to do scholarly research or serve the institution. And as Rice further observes, “the growth of full-time non-tenured positions [and] the uses of adjunct faculty . . . are the result of arbitrary, expedient, short-term decisions rather than thoughtful planning for a radically different future.” Whatever the causes, the consequences are enormous. One result is a number of “demographic shifts in non-tenured faculty—more female, diverse, and older” (Rice 2006, 12). These new faculty members bring with them new life experiences, aspirations, and values that may challenge traditional academic assumptions and practices.

At the very time that expectations for faculty are increasing, the ranks of full-time faculty are thinning.

Another consequence of the rise of a contingent faculty is the significant challenge it poses to the traditional practice of reserving the privileges of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance for tenured and tenure-track faculty. I believe there is a need for all faculty, regardless of type of appointment, to have the freedom to teach students controversial topics and challenge their preconceived ideas, to enjoy constructive and stimulating peer relationships with other faculty members and academic professionals, and to participate in shared governance. We need to create new kinds of academic communities and adapt our thinking about professional standards—not abandon them—so they apply to all who teach today’s students.

Judith Gappa, Ann Austin, and Andrea Trice (2007) have studied faculty outside the tenure system and concluded that the professional lives of all faculty, regardless of type of appointment, should be characterized by equity, flexibility, academic freedom, collegiality, and professional development. Unfortunately, a disparity between those within and outside the tenure system too often persists.

Two additional concerns are associated with the growth in part-time faculty. At the very time that expectations for faculty are increasing, the ranks of full-time faculty are thinning. This makes it difficult for many institutions to meet the greater educational expectations held for them. An accreditation official recently told me of one extreme example: a community college that enrolls nearly four thousand students with a full-time faculty of ten!
In addition, the rise of a contingent faculty reduces the power and authority of the faculty as a whole and increases the ability of administrators to make decisions with less faculty oversight. To a substantial extent, this shift amounts to a subversion, however unintentional, of the basic agreement between the professoriate and society.

I want to be clear: I do not believe that faculty members with term appointments, adjuncts, or teaching assistants are poor teachers or that they are not as good as tenured or tenure-track faculty members. In fact, on any campus, contingent faculty are among the very best teachers. But the nature of their appointments—and the ways faculties have defined who is a peer entitled to academic freedom and allowed to participate in governance—diminishes their standing. They are more vulnerable to attacks by assertive students, aggrieved senior faculty, and ambitious administrators.

5. New educational models. The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) has called attention to a number of innovative and especially effective pedagogical practices. These are characterized by an emphasis on interdisciplinary as well as disciplinary study; on critical thinking and communication skills as well as content knowledge; on practical uses of knowledge as well as abstract learning; on community and global engagement as well as classroom study; and on coherent, cumulative, and integrative learning as well as learning in separate courses in disparate academic disciplines. While the older practices continue, innovative approaches are becoming more common. All of these newer practices involve closer relationships and greater interaction between students and professors.

In a similar vein, George Kuh (2008) has identified several educational practices that have been shown to have a particularly “high impact” on the education of students. These include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments, undergraduate research, diversity and global learning, service learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects. All involve faculty sharing their authority with students, all give students greater authority over their own learning, and all position faculty more as facilitators than simply as subject-matter experts.

6. Attacks on faculty. Neoconservative attacks on supposedly “liberal” professors have been a staple of academic life for at least two decades. But recently, a number of openly conservative and vocal organizations have attempted to overthrow traditional practices of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. While advocating for legislation ostensibly designed to protect the freedom of speech of conservative students, for example, the real underlying purpose of groups like David Horowitz’s Students for Academic Freedom appears to be to dilute the academic freedom and authority of the faculty. Similarly, the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), cofounded by Lynne Cheney, claims on its Web site that it is “committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America’s colleges and universities.” Yet ACTA has pressed vigorously for traditional curricula focused on Western culture and against efforts to introduce more diversity into courses and curricula—thereby imposing itself into matters over which faculty traditionally have had authority. The newly formed Center for Excellence in Higher Education seeks to increase donors’ control over the uses of funds, even to the point of approving the hiring of specific faculty members for programs they support and, thereby, usurping faculty authority to conduct peer review of the expertise of their colleagues.
All of these organizations are funded by right-wing philanthropists. Despite using terms like “academic freedom” and “educational excellence,” these organizations really seek to reduce the academic freedom of faculty and the faculty’s authority over the educational program. They seek stronger roles in shared governance for students, trustees, alumni, and donors—at the expense of the faculty who possess the relevant scholarly knowledge, training, and expertise essential to vibrant colleges and universities.¹

In sum, any contemporary reconsideration of the prerogatives derived from the faculty profession’s social contract must be undertaken within the context of the new realities discussed above: market-driven competition, a deepened commitment to student learning, a changing assumptive world for faculty, a sharply increasing proportion of contingent faculty, more collaborative and engaging models of education, and external attacks on the faculty and its traditional prerogatives. The challenge is to renew the social contract between the professoriate and society in the midst of these trends and with a commitment to fulfilling the current educational mission of the academy.

My AAC&U colleagues and I have long asserted that students should be prepared for responsible citizenship as well as professional success. Indeed, the liberal education of all students is essential for our knowledge-based economy and diverse society. Students need to learn the arts of scholarly inquiry to illuminate their world; to become part of the process of inquiry and discovery; and to become participants in the larger community of critical investigation, debate, examination of evidence, and application of knowledge to solve real-world problems. The American professoriate serves the transcendent value of preparing students for lives of service to this ideal.

Professional standards for faculty were formulated to serve both the learning interests of students and the scholarly interests of faculty. Traditionally, the balance has tilted toward faculty pursuit of their own intellectual interests. But the learning of students is seen by the public as the more transcendent value, and I argue that this purpose should now receive greater emphasis for reasons that are articulated below. Academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance are important for the education of students as well as for the conduct of research. Although they are interrelated, it is nonetheless instructive to consider each of these elements of the social contract of the academic profession separately.

### Academic Freedom

Earlier, when virtually all faculty members were full time and either had earned tenure or were on the tenure track, it made perfectly good sense to protect academic freedom by linking it to tenure. When faculty members were threatened with the loss of their jobs for speaking publicly about controversial issues, it was correct to point out that professors need autonomy to teach controversial issues and do original research. It was possible to protect academic freedom by granting tenure to qualified professors. But today, tenure and tenure-track positions are rapidly disappearing (Schuster and Finkelstein 2006). If

---

¹ In Zealotry and Academic Freedom (1997), Hamilton identifies seven waves of zealotry in higher education since the formation of the modern university in the late 1880s. Five originate outside the academy and from the political right, and two originate within the university and from the left. While he is concerned with the more recent threats described in this essay, he does not regard them as an eighth wave largely because they have been unsuccessful. He also notes that, on many campuses, academic freedom is threatened by the overzealous use of speech codes sparked by pressures from the left.
The Future of the Professoriate

academic freedom is important—and I believe it is vital—then isn’t it important for all who teach controversial subjects to students and who help students formulate their own ideas grounded in science and scholarship?

At research universities, a large part of the instruction of undergraduates is provided by graduate teaching assistants. Many of these are professors-in-training who need to learn about academic freedom and responsibility as well as to learn the arts of teaching students in ways that challenge them to grow more intellectually mature. More telling, at many institutions a large number of students in English and mathematics—basic subjects for all of learning—are taught by adjunct professors or teaching assistants, the most vulnerable teachers. These instructors need to learn about academic freedom, grow in their understanding of both its power and limits, and rely on it as inherent in their educational endeavors.

The original rationale for academic freedom was that it was essential to intellectual inquiry and research, particularly into controversial topics. When they research topics that challenge entrenched—often powerful—interests, faculty must have their speech protected so that their jobs are not in jeopardy. But academic freedom is essential to anyone—whatever their employment status—who pursues ideas in a scholarly way, is charged with teaching contested topics, helps students think critically and formulate their own views of the world in accordance with the best available knowledge, or encourages students to explore the ethical and social implications of their disciplines. This means that the justification for academic freedom should be grounded in the proper education of students, by which we at AAC&U mean liberal education, as well as in the scholarly activity of faculty members.

Liberal education is the premier tradition of college education in the United States. It used to be focused on the classics and on “best books” in liberal arts and sciences disciplines, and it used to be available only to a small number of elite students—mostly young white men. But as Schneider (2008, 34) points out, liberal education today is inclusive and “emphasizes an approach to learning . . . and gives primary attention to the habits of mind, breadth of perspective, and capabilities the student is developing. The ability of students to apply their knowledge to real problems is one indicator of their achievement level.” This means that liberal education is important for all students, whatever their academic major or anticipated career. As Schneider explains, “this shift toward an emphasis on capability and competence means that liberal education can be addressed across the entire educational experience, and in professional and career fields as well as the arts and sciences disciplines” (34).

To help students think critically about a subject or problem, faculty members need to take seriously what students already know or believe about that topic and engage that prior understanding so new learning modifies the old—complicating, correcting, and expanding it. This process of cultivating a liberal education is a journey that transforms the minds, the hearts, and frequently the starting assumptions of those involved—both teachers and students. Because knowledge is always expanding, the eventual destination is uncertain.2

To develop their own critical judgment, students also need the freedom to express their ideas publicly as well as repeated opportunities to explore a wide range of insights and perspectives. They need a protected

---

The justification for academic freedom should be grounded in the proper education of students, as well as in the scholarly activity of faculty members.

---

2. Much of the language in this section is taken from the AAC&U statement on academic freedom and education responsibility (2006), of which I was the primary author.
space to try out their ideas and to consider alternative perspectives. As any contemporary faculty member knows, when confronted by students with fixed beliefs and a resistance to further discussion, this exercise will not always be smooth. It may be unsettling to students and their families. The diversity of the educational community is a rich resource to this educational process, but it also can expose disagreements. Students need to learn to disagree without becoming disagreeable. Research shows that students are more likely to develop cognitive complexity when they interact frequently with people, views, and experiences that are different from their own.

Learning to form independent judgments further requires that students be both open to the challenges their ideas may elicit and willing to reconsider their original views in light of new knowledge, evidence, and perspectives. Just as a crustacean breaks its confining shell in order to grow, so students may have to jettison narrow concepts as they expand their knowledge and develop more advanced analytic capacities. As they acquire the capacities to encounter, grasp, and evaluate diverse points of view, they also gain more nuanced, sophisticated, and mature understandings of the world. Every college student deserves to experience the intellectual excitement that comes from extending the known to the unknown and to discern previously unsuspected relationships.

In discussions of academic freedom, the concept of “responsibility” is quite rare. But AAC&U has asserted that professors enjoy academic freedom not only for their own scholarship, but also because of their educational responsibilities. As AAC&U concludes in Academic Freedom and Educational Responsibility,

> Academic freedom is sometimes confused with autonomy, thought and speech freed from all constraints. But academic freedom implies not just freedom from constraint but also freedom for faculty and students to work within a scholarly community to develop the intellectual and personal qualities required of citizens in a vibrant democracy and participants in a vigorous economy. Academic freedom is protected by society so that faculty and students can use that freedom to promote the larger good. (2006, 7)

Traditionally, academic freedom has been enforced, insofar as it is at all, by a report of violations to the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which asks its Committee on Academic Freedom to investigate allegations. If the committee finds that an institution has violated academic freedom, the membership can vote to impose sanctions, typically censure, and to publicize the indiscretion. This procedure may have been effective when the AAUP was the premier organization promoting professional standards for faculty members. But over the years, the AAUP’s traditional commitment to professional issues has been eclipsed by a commitment to economic issues, as approximately 60 percent of AAUP members now come through its collective bargaining unit. It makes little sense to vest the enforcement of academic freedom in an organization that is one of the largest faculty unions and whose members number only forty-four thousand (according to its Web site), a small percentage of the entire professoriate. Until very recently, the AAUP had not even investigated complaints about the infringement of academic freedom from contingent faculty. Further, the academic labor market today is such that
applicants for faculty jobs may not know about an AAUP censure, nor may they care much. This enforcement
mechanism is antiquated and increasingly ineffective.3

Academic freedom is too important to the education of all students and to the conduct of research for
the nation to continue to entrust its enforcement to this mechanism. Every college and university that is
in the business of educational excellence must see to it that faculty members—and students—can study
controversial topics, formulate their own convictions based on science and learning, and explore the social
and ethical implications of their expertise. They need protection in this important, complex, and basically
delicate process of learning. Boards of trustees, institutional presidents, and administrations should have a
fiduciary responsibility to see that this educational process operates with integrity.

Occasional conflicts in which faculty members believe
that their academic freedom has been abridged by an
administration or a board of trustees may nonetheless
occur, and there should be some extra-institutional body
that can be called upon to investigate and resolve such con-
flicts. It is beyond the scope of this essay to delineate the
nature of such a body, but it is important that faculty mem-
bers and institutional leaders have some recourse to expertise to help adjudicate such conflicts. Further,
since tensions between faculty and administrations develop over time, that body would ideally be able to
provide assistance that could prevent actions that might result in a violation. The academy has a number of
centers for conflict analysis and resolution, and it should be possible to draw from such expertise to develop
a body that could be a valuable resource in preventing and resolving conflicts over academic freedom.

Based on his study of unionized faculty—whom he calls “managed professionals”—AAUP President
Gary Rhoades confirms the ability of faculty members and institutions to reach mutually agreeable accom-
modations. After analyzing hundreds of faculty union contracts, he concludes that “the contractual terms of
faculty employment are such that managers have considerable flexibility to restructure academic labor . . . Yet

3. Hamilton notes that AAUP focuses on faculty rights rather than duties: “Other than notable exceptions like the 1915 Declaration of Principles
and the 1966 Statement on Professional Ethics, AAUP has given very little attention to faculty professionalism and virtually no attention to the
socialization of faculty into the social contract” (pers. comm.).
unionized faculty have established professional structures, constraints, and rights in the contractual terms of their labor that restrict managerial prerogatives and discretion. They have negotiated important safeguards for professional autonomy and independence” (Rhoades 1998, 257). It is possible for faculty members and institutional authorities to reach agreement about fundamental professional standards.

In sum, academic freedom can be enhanced in five ways:

» Root it in the transcendent value of educating students for a complex society as well as in the scholarly and research activities of faculty.

» Extend academic freedom to all who teach students to think critically about controversial and contested topics.

» Recognize that students need freedom to explore ideas and try on new beliefs, obtain honest feedback, and enjoy guidance from their faculty members.

» Emphasize that freedom is an instrumental value that serves the important ends of promoting the education of students as well as conducting original research.

» Find a more effective mechanism for enforcing academic freedom and responsibility.

Peer Review

The second element of the professoriate’s social contract is peer review. In the preceding essay, Hamilton describes the bargain with society according to which the academic profession enjoys professional autonomy. In exchange, professors are expected to adhere to professional and ethical standards, to certify that their colleagues are competent, and to ensure their students learn at acceptable levels. Peer review is the widely accepted practice according to which faculty members in a department make routine decisions about the hiring of qualified faculty candidates, conduct annual reviews of members of the department, and judge colleagues’ fitness for tenure. Also, peer review is widely practiced in making decisions about the award of grants for research or educational purposes and in making decisions about whether to publish a scholarly article. Indeed, peer review typically adds credibility and value to such academic decisions.

But in practice, some professors are reluctant to confront a colleague who may be suspected of behaving in an inappropriate way. Sometimes a faculty member receives information from a student about a colleague who has behaved poorly or used a questionable method of evaluating a student’s achievement, but decides not to pursue the matter. There is a good deal of “senatorial courtesy” in the academy as in the U.S. Senate.

The definition of “peer” is complicated by the new realities in the academy. The term has typically been used to refer to faculty members with similar subject matter expertise in an academic discipline or department. This is why the above practices of peer review work so well—they take place within a discipline or department. But peer review does not work as effectively when the topic or issue crosses specializations. As Donald Farmer, the late academic vice president of King’s College has observed, “we are well organized vertically. But all of our new strategic educational initiatives are horizontal. We are not organized to address them” (pers. comm.). He was referring to the efforts of his own and other
institutions to incorporate such learning goals as global perspectives, ethical analyses, and writing across the curriculum. These purposes require faculty to work with colleagues as peers across departments.

Also, modern colleges and universities offer many interdisciplinary programs, such as environmental studies, American studies, or women’s studies that may draw faculty from departments across the institution. Further, “high-impact” programs such as freshman seminars, learning communities, and senior seminars require faculty with different areas of specialization to work together. So too does the faculty as a whole as it devises and implements a general education curriculum, establishes common graduation requirements, or assesses student learning outcomes across the entire institution. These are faculty responsibilities inherent in most contemporary institutions. And they extend the definition of the term “peer” to include all faculty working together on important interdisciplinary educational programs. Faculty in these programs can judge colleagues’ contributions to the program even if they have different intellectual specializations or are housed in different departments. They can attest to a colleague’s contribution to the design of the program, to his or her educational effectiveness in teaching in the program, or to the quality of his or her scholarship related to issues of the program.

Indeed, unless leaders of interdisciplinary programs have a role to play in reviewing a colleague’s performance, traditional academic departments are privileged over innovative, interdisciplinary programs. I have talked with many directors of general education programs who lament that they have no role in assessing a colleague’s performance or deciding which faculty to include in their program. Sometimes they are forced to accept weak faculty members who are unable to secure enough students to take their courses in their own departments. Interdisciplinary programs, even when they are approved by the faculty, can be weakened by the failure to extend peer review beyond traditional departments.

Broad transdepartmental conversations often get bogged down in considerations of turf and competition over resources. This is such a difficult problem that perhaps the most influential of all AAC&U publications, *Integrity in the College Curriculum* (1985, 9), declares “the task is to revive responsibility of the faculty as a whole for the curriculum as a whole.” AAC&U has developed a number of resources—publications, meetings, and consultations—to help faculties work together for common learning of all students. A new publication (Gaston and Gaff 2009) identifies many “potholes” in revising the general education curriculum and makes recommendations for succeeding with institution-wide initiatives.

Part of the problem is that while faculty members are trained to possess subject matter knowledge, they typically are not trained to design or develop a coherent and sequential “program of study.” This is especially true when the issue transcends their disciplinary specialization and requires them to work with individuals with different expertise, as is increasingly common in today’s academy.

At AAC&U, we use an inclusive definition of “peer.” Most of our meetings and our funded national projects include not just faculty members from different disciplines and types of institutions but also administrators in a variety of roles—provosts, academic deans, coordinators of diversity, etc.—leaders of disciplinary societies, association officials, government policy makers, assessment experts, and foundation officials working together. We find that interaction with a broad range of peers broadens the perspectives...
of the individual participants. Many faculty members find intellectual stimulation, professional and personal renewal, and gratification in providing leadership for interdisciplinary programs and in contributing to the enhancement of their institutions beyond their departments.

Some institutions have created new academic leadership positions such as dean of general education, director of service learning, coordinator of undergraduate research, and vice chancellor for student success. These positions typically are filled by faculty members with a passion for the particular work they are asked to do. Their job is to create new peer groups that transcend departments and disciplines to address important educational goals for student learning (see Gaff 2007).

In addition, every college or university contains many individuals who do not possess faculty status but who make important contributions to the education of students. Linda McMillin (2006) has noted the educational contributions of instructional technologists, librarians, advisers, graduate teaching assistants, student affairs staff, and individuals leading service learning, internships, and foreign study initiatives, among others. She urges that professors develop a close partnership with these other professionals who also educate students, so they are not relegated to the status of second-class citizens, as is sometimes the case. Just as a physician is the head of a team of health care professionals—including, for example, other specialist physicians, nurses, medical technicians, physical therapists, and home health care providers—so too is a professor the head of a team of educational professionals. McMillan urges a more collaborative spirit and greater teamwork among all who contribute to the education of students (see also Moore 2007). Although such professionals may not have a formal role to play in reviewing a faculty member’s performance, they can easily be welcomed as members of the “same team” by faculty in designing or implementing an educational program.

The education of students, too, must be considered in a discussion of peers. What message would it send to students if their professors’ knowledge and expertise are denigrated and if their academic decisions are not respected by institutional authorities? The educational purpose of any teacher should be to focus not only on students’ learning the subject-matter content of a course, but also on the distinctive perspectives and methods of a discipline or field of study—the windows it opens to the world. This does not mean that professors impose their political views on students, but rather that they should help students understand key concepts and see the world more clearly in newer, richer, more nuanced ways. The goal for the student, at whatever level, is to learn to use the inquiry, analytical, and problem-solving approaches taught in the academy and to become as much a peer of the teacher as possible. After all, this is why baccalaureate degree recipients are welcomed into the company of educated men and women. Graduates are recognized as having achieved a status that is, in some fundamental sense, related to that of the faculty in terms of knowledge, the ability to analyze and synthesize ideas, think through issues, take reasoned stands—and yes, to adopt an open, curious, and inquiring spirit. It is also why PhD recipients make a similar transition, albeit at a higher level, to become genuine intellectual peers of the faculty, although they remain junior scholars with a career-long amount of learning—both theoretical and practical—ahead of them.
Of course, some faculty members do go beyond teaching their fields and try to impose their own views on students. And some students feel frightened or threatened when asked to give up familiar certainties or to entertain new ideas and perspectives. This is all part of the delicate process of teaching and learning. Students need to learn how to join a community of inquiry and practice without abandoning their own core values or their selfhood, and faculty members need to learn to help students master this delicate process. Good education is a mysterious, complex, and messy process through which faculty and students continually learn and grow.

In sum, the faculty can enhance peer review in three ways:

- Extend the definition of “peer” beyond faculty members with similar subject matter expertise, and include faculty involved in interdisciplinary or across-the-curriculum programs as well as those involved in the curriculum as a whole.
- Develop strong partnerships with other professionals who, though not themselves faculty members, also play important educational roles as they work for the holistic education of students.
- Model for students how to become a peer who collaborates with other professionals, both in their own specialization and in others.

Shared Governance

The third element of the professoriate’s social contract is shared governance. As Jack Schuster and Martin Finkelstein have observed (2006, 358), “almost no one is pleased with the way campuses are governed: not faculty, not administrators, not governing boards, not external observers.” Governance often refers to all aspects of governing an institution, but for this essay I restrict it to responsibility for the educational program—not setting the mission, managing the finances, maintaining the physical plant, raising funds, or conducting public relations of the institution. This is the one area where the faculty is widely regarded as having primary authority (Hamilton 1999).

Institutions of higher learning are legally governed by lay boards of trustees on which leading business, political, and community figures are usually appointed to serve. Most trustees are appointed, not because of their expertise about higher education, but rather for what they can contribute to the institution either by their own wisdom, wealth, and work or through their influence, reputation, or network of contacts. Although trustees have been legally responsible, for most of the last century they have yielded responsibility for academic judgments to the faculty, those individuals who have spent many years training to be scholars and experts in the various fields of study.

Some tension remains between the trustees with legal authority and the faculty with expert authority, but, for the most part, this system works well. However, trustees sometimes bring their own agendas to the position. As Roger W. Bowen (2001, B14), former head of the AAUP, observes, “some trustees take office with the missionary impulse to remake academe in the image of the corporation; others are intent on changing academic values to reflect the politics of the elected officials who appointed them to the board. Both groups may be hostile toward many of academe’s traditions, including academic freedom, tenure, tolerance of unconventionality, and intellectual experimentation.” Since its founding, the AAUP has urged restraint on the part of trustees and emphasized the importance of vesting authority over academic matters—those pertaining to faculty competence, student achievement, and curricular authority—with the faculty. They are the trained experts in academic matters, and they are better equipped to make deci-
sions on these matters than are religious leaders, state bureaucrats, or campus administrators. When confronted by activist trustees who seek to usurp faculty authority, faculty leaders and administrators who have risen through faculty ranks must confront the challenge and explain the importance of relying on academic experts to make academic decisions.

A board can address this tension by including several experienced academics—faculty members and administrators—on its board of trustees. Boards often have one or two academics among their members, but more substantial representation would not only provide academic leadership on the board but also help educate the rest of the board about academic ethics and professional standards during times when there is no crisis. This encourages informal restraint on the part of the board.

Typically, faculty jealously guard their legitimate right to participate in shared governance. It is, therefore, surprising that, in practice, many faculty members fail to participate, hold faculty governance in low regard, and give little recognition for the “service” contributions of their colleagues in decisions about salary, promotion, or tenure. In an article in *Academe*, the house organ of the AAUP, Joanna Scott (1997) characterizes the role of faculty in governance as “death by inattention.”

Junior faculty at some institutions are routinely advised not to get involved in campus governance and to concentrate instead on their research and teaching, which will count for more in decisions about promotion and tenure. This leaves a few older, unrepresentative faculty members to function as faculty politicians who may, in turn, tend to protect vested interests tied to the past and to resist proposals for change. If shared governance is to be strong, and if faculty expect to retain primary responsibility for the educational program, then faculty members must honor and reward professional service and restore widespread support for effective participation in governance.

Further, faculty participation in governance has traditionally been limited to full-time tenured or tenured-track faculty, which may have made sense when the faculty was almost entirely made up of these individuals. But the numbers and proportion of contingent faculty are growing so significantly that, if the idea of shared governance is to apply in today’s academy, contingent faculty members need to become more involved.

It is better to be inclusive, rather than exclusive; to include all components (perhaps by means of representatives) than to exclude large numbers of vital instructional staff from having a voice in the conditions of their own work. Some institutions are adapting their systems of academic governance to include contingent faculty. Kezar, Lester, and Anderson (2006) present a case study of a university that revised its governance to include non-tenure-track faculty. They argue that “contingent and part-time faculty are a valuable and underutilized resource that can contribute greatly to shared governance on college and university campuses” (122). After observing the difficulties of changing to a more inclusive form of governance, they offer four recommendations for other institutions interested in moving in this direction: (1) more than a token number of non-tenure-track faculty need to be involved in the revision process; (2) prevailing stereotypes against non-tenure-track faculty need to be challenged; (3) the case for involving non-tenure-track faculty needs to be made repeatedly and over a long period of time; and (4) a process is needed to surface biases and develop new ideas.

Another issue is a serious conceptual problem with shared governance that can be traced to the original division of responsibility for institutional decision making (Hamilton 1999). The faculty was
assigned primary responsibility for decisions concerning the educational program and accorded the right to be consulted about other institutional issues. Boards of trustees, presidents, and administrations were given primary responsibility for the institutional mission, finances, and planning; although they have the right to reject recommendations of the faculty about educational matters, that is to be done rarely and for publicly stated reasons. But this formulation does not address the common responsibilities of the faculty and the administration where both share similar interests. In reality, academic administrators—provosts, academic vice presidents, deans, and their staffs—as well as faculty members have responsibility for decisions about the educational program. There is a need for the faculty and the academic administration to recognize the legitimate authority of both academic administrators and faculty members, because both have been hired to implement an effective educational program. They need to share responsibility, work together, and bridge the too common divide between faculty and administration.

Yet, there is a tendency for this division of responsibility to pit faculty members and academic administrators against each other—to the detriment of faculty members, students, and their institutions (Gaff 2007). Over the years, faculty have developed a strong suspicion of any administrative involvement in academic affairs, and many administrators have consciously avoided any real or perceived intrusion into faculty areas of responsibility. One of the consequences of this practice is that many university administrators fail to exercise educational leadership (Meacham and Gaff 2006).

The most serious problem resulting from this ambiguity is that administrators are accountable for student learning, but they have no authority over the educational program. The faculty has authority, but it is almost impossible to hold the faculty as a whole accountable. There is a need to align authority and accountability for both the educational program and the resulting student learning (Gaff 2007). It is necessary to acknowledge that both faculty members and academic administrators have a common set of responsibilities and must work together toward a common goal.

The reality is that while either the faculty or the administration can exercise veto power over academic proposals that emanate from the other, neither by itself can make a major change in the educational program. It takes a positive and proactive commitment from both to operate a high-quality educational program or to make improvements to it.

Students are also important in any discussion of shared governance. Any teaching or learning experience is a partnership between the teacher and the student. Too often students are passive learners, receptacles of received knowledge who memorize texts or teachers’ notes, with the result that they end up with what Alfred North Whitehead called “inert ideas.” Effective learning occurs when students become active participants in their own education and are empowered to take responsibility for their own learning. Just as faculty members need to have a large say in the conditions of their own work in order to bring out their best efforts, so too should students have a role in determining the conditions of their learning. This, for example, is the rationale for student ratings of instructors. And student voices are routinely encouraged to help fashion the conditions of their lives out of class.

In many institutions, students are given a formal role in governing academic procedures; they serve alongside faculty members on committees dealing with such topics as the curriculum, educational policies, academic integ-
Academic Freedom, Peer Review, and Shared Governance in the Face of New Realities

Students, like faculty members, can make important contributions to ensuring that institutional policies and practices are supportive of teaching and learning. In all these ways, students learn that professionals are largely responsible for shaping their own working conditions, and those involved in governance learn how to make effective and positive contributions to the work of various committees. Students deserve also to learn that professionals—a status many students expect to attain—have a role in establishing the conditions of their own work lives. By learning to participate in the governance of their institutions, students also learn how to participate effectively as citizens in a democracy.

In sum, the faculty can enhance shared governance in four ways:

» Affirm the importance of faculty involvement in shared governance, and honor colleagues who do it well.
» Broaden participation to include all faculty, including those in contingent positions.
» Help students learn to participate in governing their own institution as a proxy for learning citizen participation.
» Clarify the responsibilities of faculty members and academic administrators to promote mutual authority and shared responsibility for educational matters.

“The Tradition” Applies to Virtually All Institutions

In the preceding essay, Hamilton argues that “the tradition” of professional standards should apply to any institution that has a mission to conduct research or teach the “discipline of dissent.” He argues that “if an institution has no knowledge-creation mission and a limited mission to teach critical inquiry and analysis, it is difficult to identify a transcendent public good its teachers are serving.” This leads him logically to categorize institutions along these two dimensions and allow those with little or no mission of research or teaching critical thinking an exemption from these standards. This formulation runs counter to one of the new realities of the academy.

Increasingly, students are taking courses at more than one institution and, through transfer of credit mechanisms, accumulating the total number of courses required to secure a baccalaureate degree. In fact, nearly 60 percent of baccalaureate degree recipients present credit earned in two institutions, and about a quarter at three or more (Bradburn et. al. 2003). Further, about half of the states mandate that general education credit fulfilled at one public institution must be accepted for transfer by other public institutions.

There are over 1,200 two-year colleges that serve as major gateways to the baccalaureate degree for hundreds of thousands of students, and one would be hard put to find one that does not claim to teach “critical inquiry and analysis.” What kind of higher education institution, whether four-year or two-year, would not make that assertion? The new reality is that virtually all institutions of higher learning make that claim.

Accordingly, any institution that expects its students to transfer credit to other institutions in order to earn a baccalaureate degree—and that includes the vast majority of institutions—must be committed to academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance. It is hard to understand how students—and faculty—can acquire the “discipline of dissent” unless they are free to pursue their ideas, explore alternatives, and examine the implications of their learning for society. It is hard to conceive of faculty who are
not regarded as legitimate peers by their colleagues engaging in a serious discussion or debate about what is understood to be the truth in their disciplines. And since professionals naturally expect to have some control over the conditions of their own work, it is hard to imagine how an institution where academic decisions are not made by trained academics can have credibility with an institution where academics possess such authority.

The educational program is only as strong as its weakest link, in this case the education offered for transfer by institutions not committed to “the tradition” of academic professionalism. This tradition can be enforced, at least partially, through the transferability of credit. This is nothing new. During the early years of the twentieth century, the United States was populated by colleges that varied greatly in terms of academic standards and educational quality. In an attempt to encourage a common standard of excellence, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching invented the “Carnegie unit,” an amount of learning equated with the amount of time a student spent in formal classroom instruction. If students took three hours of “seat time” in a calculus course at two different institutions, for example, there was the presumption of equivalence in quality. Of course, as we now know, the reality is quite different, but the Carnegie unit became widely used as a measure—actually, as a proxy—for learning. This happened largely because the foundation agreed to make substantial contributions to the retirement programs of (poorly paid) faculty at institutions that adopted the Carnegie unit.

Now as then, academic credit is the coin of the realm. The principle should be as follows: If an institution wants its students to be able transfer credit toward a baccalaureate degree at another institution, then it should commit to academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance as marks of the quality of the education their students receive. If an institution does not make this commitment to the professional standards of instructors, then the quality of the learning it provides for students is suspect, and its credits may be deemed unworthy to count toward a baccalaureate degree at institutions where these standards are valued. At the very least, if an institution does not embrace “the tradition,” it should shoulder the burden of proof to demonstrate that its students have mastered the skills of critical inquiry and analysis.

Conclusion

In sum, the traditional concepts and practices of academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance are challenged by dynamic forces both within and beyond the academy. They must be reaffirmed—not because they are prerogatives of the faculty, but because they are inherent in the process through which students acquire an excellent liberal education—and adapted to the new realities of the academy.

» Academic freedom and responsibility should be extended to contingent faculty and teaching assistants, even as many are learning from colleagues and mentors to develop their own identities as professional faculty members.

» Peer review should be seen as involving more than disciplinary expertise, recognize the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of today’s academy, and extend peer relations to faculty beyond their departments. Faculty need to collaborate with other academic professionals and work as a team to educate students; contingent faculty should be regarded as genuine peers and integrated into the educational life of departments and institutions.
All who play important roles in educating students should be included, in some ways, in the shared governance of academic programs.

In addition, as Hamilton has asserted, the entire academy must do a much better job of developing a sense of professionalism among the faculty and socializing current and future faculty members—and other academic leaders, including administrations, trustees, and the general public. Faculty leaders, presidents, and trustees are responsible for upholding these standards and for ensuring the quality and integrity of the educational program. But institutional leaders will find it helpful to have support from extra-institutional bodies that can play a positive and constructive role:

- **Graduate and professional programs** should explicitly provide those students intending an academic career with a realistic education about faculty roles in diverse institutions, including ethics and professional standards, as they have done in the Preparing Future Faculty program (Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, and Weibl 2002; Pruitt-Logan, Gaff, and Jentoft 2002; Gaff, Pruitt-Logan, Sims and Denecke 2003).

- **Disciplinary societies** ought to devise their own statements of ethics and professionalism (about a quarter have already), and many that have led Preparing Future Faculty programs should continue and help involve other societies in this important task.

- **Accrediting bodies** must incorporate standards of professionalism into their criteria and procedures; after all, if an institution does not support academic freedom, peer review, and shared governance, then how can it claim to be a genuine educational institution and expect its students to transfer credit to other institutions?

The good news is that these are all things that we in the academy can actually do. The knee-jerk reaction of many faculty and other campus leaders is to rail against the external factors that have created what I have called the “new realities,” lament the power of market forces and the rise of consumerism among students, complain that politicians do not allocate enough money to hire more full-time tenured faculty, and sometimes develop nostalgia about the loss of a golden age in higher education. All these complaints may be valid, but the underlying issues are out of the control of campus leaders.

But academic leaders can think hard about the social contract of the academic profession; the profession’s transcendent values of educating students to be responsible citizens, contributors to the economy, and creators of knowledge; and the professional rights and responsibilities of the professoriate that are necessary to fulfill the social contract. They also can explain to the public what a contemporary liberal education consists of and why students deserve to study with faculty who have academic freedom, enjoy the respect of their professional peers, and are not marginalized or excluded from academic governance. These steps are under the control of the academy, particularly the professoriate. By adopting this approach, educational leaders can proactively deal with the public attacks on higher education, especially those directed at faculty members. It also allows advocates to make the case for these professional standards as a precondition to achieve something everyone wants—an excellent education for all students.
References


LaPidus, J. B. 1998. If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change. In *The experience of being in graduate school: An exploration*, ed. M. S. Anderson, 95–102. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.


Neil W. Hamilton is professor of law at the University of St. Thomas School of Law (MN) and founding director of the Holloran Center for Ethical Leadership in the Professions. He has also served there as associate dean for academic affairs, and in 2006 he served as visiting professor at George Washington University School of Law. He is the author of Ethical Leadership and Professionalism: Living Authentically in the Professions (forthcoming), Academic Ethics: Problems and Materials on Professional Conduct and Shared Governance (2002), and Zealotry and Academic Freedom (1995). Hamilton has received many honors, including the Minnesota State Bar Association’s Professional Excellence Award and the 2009 John Ireland Presidential Award for outstanding achievement from the University of St. Thomas. He is also the recipient of the University of St. Thomas School of Law Excellence in Professional Preparation Award and the Hennepin County (Minneapolis) Bar Association Professionalism Award.

Jerry G. Gaff is senior scholar at the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) where, since 1975, he has worked to enhance the general and liberal education of students and the professionalism of faculty members. From 1993 to 2003 he was the founding director of Preparing Future Faculty, a joint program of AAC&U and the Council of Graduate Schools. He has been on the faculty of five institutions and has served as both a dean and a university president. He has conducted research, directed national projects, published numerous books and articles, and consulted with hundreds of campuses. Gaff has received many honors, including the Association for General and Liberal Studies offering an award in his name to recognize faculty members for campus leadership for general and liberal education.
About AAC&U

AAC&U is the leading national association concerned with the quality, vitality, and public standing of undergraduate liberal education. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,150 accredited public and private colleges and universities of every type and size.

AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, and faculty members who are engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Its mission is to reinforce the collective commitment to liberal education at both the national and local levels and to help individual institutions keep the quality of student learning at the core of their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges.