

Owing to what Gene Rice identifies in this issue as “the result of arbitrary, expedient, short-term decisions rather than thoughtful planning,” the prototypical American scholar—the full-time tenured professor engaged in teaching, research, and institutional and professional service—is fast becoming an anachronism.

By 2001, less than 25 percent of new faculty appointments were being made to full-time tenure-track positions; roughly half of all new appointments are now part-time, and more than half of the remaining full-time positions are off the tenure track. In an article published here three years ago, Martin Finkelstein, drawing from ongoing research conducted with Jack Schuster, called attention to this startling development and argued that it amounts to a “new academic ‘revolution.’” Finkelstein and Schuster’s research collaboration has since culminated in *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*, an exhaustive and sobering examination of the trends contributing to this new academic revolution.

## FROM THE EDITOR

Finkelstein and Schuster point out that the traditional notion of faculty work as consisting in the in-

tegration of teaching, research, and service roles has been undermined by “an evolution in the nature and scope of the faculty’s work over the past quarter century.” Overall, they explain, there has been “a sharpening of focus—a narrowing of the scope—of faculty activities: teaching and, increasingly, research form the dyadic core, while other activities, such as administration and academic citizenship, are being relegated more and more to the periphery.” Thus, what is often described as the “unbundling” of faculty roles is being achieved at the expense of the service role.

What do the changes in the nature of academic appointments and in the nature and scope of faculty work mean for the future of the academic profession? What do they mean for academic freedom and shared governance?

In one way or another, each of the authors published in the Featured Topic section issues a warning. Gene Rice warns that the changes affecting faculty work are so significant that incremental approaches to reform will prove inadequate. Neil Hamilton warns that, if the failures of faculty professionalism he describes are not addressed through the intentional socialization of new and future faculty, the loss of professional autonomy may be inevitable. Stanley Aronowitz warns that the steady corporatization of American higher education is imperiling faculty governance. And Roger Baldwin and Deborah Chang warn that, through a lack of support for faculty in the middle phase of their careers, institutions are squandering a key resource.

Even as we continue to champion the value of a liberal education, we must ask ourselves whether an academy where the majority of undergraduate instruction is conducted by contingent faculty, and where arbitrary and shortsighted decisions are resulting in faculty disempowerment and limits to academic freedom, is an academy that can fulfill the promise of a quality liberal education for all students.—DAVID TRITELLI

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