

The Changing Employment Relationships of Academics in North America and its Implications for Regional Faculty Collaboration

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Abstract

This panel analyzes the way in which full-time academic appointments are being restructured in North America and elaborates on the implications for regional faculty mobility and collaboration. While Canada and the United States are introducing a parallel system of fixed term contracts alongside the traditional tenure system for full-time faculty, Mexico has introduced a new profile for its full-time academics. While these developments are associated with changes in faculty roles specific to each country, what is common is that the “traditional” faculty roles in each country are being re-shaped, which is to say that a new balance between teaching, research and service, is evolving. Given the worldwide push for internationalization of higher education, the panel elaborates some of the implications of re-structured faculty roles with regard to regional faculty mobility and collaboration. We consider the impact of the described changes on faculty potentially interested in regional collaboration, the training and supervision of graduate students, the need to incorporate a country-specific understanding of faculty working conditions into the faculty exchange equation, and the necessity, in all three countries, of stronger institutional and public policies targeted at aligning faculty work and regional exchange and collaboration.

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Biographical Summaries

Jesús F. Galaz-Fontes is Professor of Education at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, Mexicali, Baja California. Former Director of the School of Educational Sciences and Head of the Department of Planning, Follow-Up and Strategic Planning at the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California, México, he received his Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate University and has studied and published mainly in the area of higher education faculty, including job satisfaction, merit-pay systems and faculty governance. He has been a visiting professor at Seton Hall University and at the University of Arizona, where he held the Chair of International Higher Education at the Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration, CONAHEC, and at the Center for Higher Education Studies. He currently coordinates the Mexican Work Group of the international project The Changing Academic Profession.

Amy Scott Metcalfe is Assistant Professor of Higher Education at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Metcalfe first became familiar with CONAHEC during her PhD studies at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona. At UBC she is affiliated with the Centre for Policy Studies in Higher Education and Training, and has presented several papers locally and internationally on the topic of NAFTA and higher education. She is an associate editor of the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, and an active member of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE) and the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE). Along with Dr. Galaz-Fontes and Dr. Finkelstein, she is part of a multi-country research investigation called The Changing Academic Profession.

Martin Finkelstein is Professor of Higher Education at Seton Hall University, South Orange, NJ. He received his Ph.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1978. Since then, he has taught at the University of Denver and Teacher's College, Columbia University and has served as a Visiting Scholar at the Claremont Graduate University and the Research Institute for Higher Education, Hiroshima University, Japan. Between 1989-1997, he served as the Executive Director of the New Jersey Institute for Collegiate Teaching and Learning. He is the author of *The American Academic Profession* (Ohio State University Press, 1988) and *The New Academic Generation* (with Robert Seal and Jack Schuster, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). His new book with Jack Schuster *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*, was published in early 2006 by the Johns Hopkins University Press.