



# The Faculty Factor: Reassessing the American Academy in a Turbulent Era

*Martin J. Finkelstein, Valerie Martin Conley, Jack H. Schuster*

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Over the past 70 years, the American university has become the global gold standard of excellence in research and graduate education. The unprecedented surge of federal research support of the post-World War II American university paralleled the steady strengthening of the American academic profession itself, which managed to attract the best and brightest educators from around the world while expanding the influence of the "faculty factor" throughout the academic realm. But in the past two decades, escalating costs and intensifying demands for efficiency have resulted in a wholesale reshaping of the academic workforce, one marked by skyrocketing numbers of contingent faculty members.

Extending Jack H. Schuster and Martin J. Finkelstein's richly detailed classic *The American Faculty: The Restructuring of Academic Work and Careers*, this important book documents the transformation of the American faculty—historically the leading global source of Nobel laureates and innovation—into a diversified and internally stratified professional workforce. Drawing on heretofore unpublished data, the book provides the most comprehensive contemporary depiction of the changing nature of academic work and what it means to be a college or university faculty member in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The rare higher education study to incorporate multinational perspectives by comparing the status and prospects of American faculty to teachers in the major developing economies of Europe and East Asia, *The Faculty Factor* also explores the redistribution of academic work and the ever-more diverse pathways for entering into, maneuvering through, and exiting from academic careers.

Using the tools of sociology, anthropology, and demography, the book charts the impact of waves of technological change, mass globalization, and the severe financial constraints of the last decade to show the impact on the lives and careers of those who teach in higher education. The authors propose strategic policy recommendations to extend the strengths of American higher education to retain leadership in the global economy. Written for professors, adjuncts, graduate students, and academic, political, business, and not-for-profit leaders, this data-rich study offers a balanced assessment of the risks and opportunities posed for the American faculty by economic, market-driven forces beyond their control.

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