Intensifying Cracks in the Bedrock of Academic Culture: Examining Faculty's Connection to Profession and Community

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INTRODUCTION: ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE – CONNECTING TO PROFESSION AND COMMUNITY

"An organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it." Academic culture in particular also reveals how and what is communicated about decisions made and measures taken (Tierney, 1988, 3). At its core, culture is established by collective agreements and interpersonal connections (Kezar et al., 2019). For this commentary, we interpret collective agreements as how faculty relate to the profession broadly and campuses specifically and interpersonal connections as those between colleagues, students, and administrators both within institutions and across academic discipline, field, and industry levels. Tierney (1988) also suggested that understanding the contours of our respective organizational cultures can be difficult in routine interactions, but crisis makes us more cognizant of the boundaries and interpretations found within and dictated by organizations. Rarely has organizational culture mattered more than it has during the last 18 months with the COVID-19 pandemic, political upheaval, and racial unrest that intersected during 2020 and the remaining forces that continue to upend realities across the landscape.

With these initial considerations in mind, we first establish the importance of relationship building as a critical feature of organizational culture, how faculty's relationship-building norms existed before the events of 2020, and how those dynamics operate now. Building on the foundational feature of relationship building, we then highlight how faculty's orientations to their profession and institutions existed and evolved. We pay special attention to identifying how faculty with minoritized identities navigate both pre- and post-2020 organizational culture. We understand minoritized faculty to be faculty that are rendered minorities within hegemonic and oppressive academic organizational spaces because of one's gender, race/ethnicity, sexuality, religion, or immigration status, among other identities, where power relations can inflict forms of violence on individuals or groups. In addition, and especially for the purposes of this commentary, we include any faculty member who has a contingent employment relationship with the institution of 1 year or less. Finally, we conclude with recommendations for academic leaders and national associations with whom faculty regularly interact.

RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Relationship building or interpersonal connections, Kezar and colleagues (2019) argue, have been "essential conditions for learning in many cultures and have been central to Western higher learning since the time of Socrates and Plato" (77), although they also acknowledge the deterioration of relationships and community in today's educational institutions. In this paper, we use the term *relationship building* to mean the connections created to establish effective learning conditions for students and to interact collegially to conduct the university's business and our own advancement in academia. Tierney (1988) posits that the goal of organizational culture is to reduce conflict and antagonistic relationships and perhaps even help leaders evaluate and manage "institutional responsiveness and performance" (5). Therefore, building relationships has long been a crucial aspect of organizational culture, whether you consider the relationship between faculty and colleagues (O'Meara and Stromquist, 2015), faculty and students (O'Meara et al., 2013), or faculty and administrators (Kezar et al., 2019).

However, culture is also determined by the various actors' interpretation of the collective agreements that instruct us on academic rules and norms (Tierney, 1988). We, therefore, approach the literature from a differentiation framework (Tierney, 2012). This entails examining the literature in such a way to acknowledge the subcultures that "have different interpretations of the organizational world based on their perspectives" (Tierney, 2012, 170). Essentially, this means that all faculty may experience a broader organizational culture along with a separate culture of politics and interests within their group membership. Given the various unclear productivity assessments early-career faculty navigate (Lunsford et al., 2018) and the impermanent and peripheral experiences of contingent faculty who make up increasingly larger proportions of the faculty (Kezar et al., 2019), we concentrate part of our review on early-career faculty and contingent faculty relationships to the various entities that contribute to organizational culture. Additionally, we focus significantly on the experiences of faculty with minoritized identities, since the unclear challenges early-career faculty and contingent faculty face are often magnified for faculty with these social identities.

We review literature on three aspects of relationship building within organizational culture that contribute to multifaceted challenges many in academia face while overlapping the perspectives of early-career faculty and contingent faculty. We then underscore how COVID-19

has changed how we connect, and finally, a synthesis of the realities of relationship building for faculty with minoritized identities.

Relationships with whom and for what?

Building relationships is a complex process, made both more intricate and burdensome by the increasingly individualistic nature of academia that has been driven by academic capitalism (Kezar et al., 2019). This literature review will consist of various intersecting examples of relationship building to demonstrate the complexity of the many connections that affect faculty life, both competing and feeding the organizational culture. The purpose is to underscore the dynamic and interconnected aspects of relationship building that make up the subgroups of faculty organizational culture. We first review examples of mentoring relationships, then discuss relationships for supporting students, and finally address the difficulty in relationship building given the nameless-faceless dimension in organizational culture (López and Morgan, 2021). The nameless-faceless aspect of organizational culture in academia refers to the various ways anonymous peers and administrators judge faculty. The relationships highlighted here also draw attention to an ideal practice wherein relationships work dynamically and interconnectedly to build community and connection. This ideal practice may likely be representative of some faculty with privileged identities and academic status, but often work against each other for faculty with minoritized identities and contingent faculty.

Mentoring

Mentoring is frequently perceived and utilized as a tool to aid faculty in successfully navigating their advancement (Núñez et al., 2015), but not all faculty are mentored similarly. Early-career faculty are more likely to have mentors than other faculty (Lunsford et al., 2018), which corresponds with institutions' commitment to them and the processes to earn tenure. Nevertheless, even with that commitment, early-career faculty with minoritized identities are less likely to receive mentoring that is "validating and inclusive of their perspective" (Núñez et al.,

2015, 89). Contingent faculty often lack mentoring of any kind or even have any points of contact on campus (Kezar et al., 2019). All too often, this lack of appropriate mentoring means that early-career faculty with minoritized identities struggle through the process without these valuable connections and contingent faculty lack the networks and mentoring to change their status. Further compounding the process of building relationships for the sake of their development is the cultural taxation on faculty with minoritized identities (Guillaume and Apodaca, 2020), whether tenure track or contingent. The response to cultural taxation is frequently to eschew their responsibility to students with minoritized identities, which creates tension for faculty with minoritized identities.

Student Dynamics

An equally important form of relationship building is the connection to students, especially graduate students. O'Meara and colleagues (2013) posit that there are varying levels of relationships with students. One level, an adviser, is described as perfunctory and transactional versus a deeper relationship that they describe as mentoring. Operationally, a deeper relationship looks like creating a more "humanized environment" and being authentic and vulnerable in their interactions (Santa-Ramirez, 2021). Latinx graduate students, and other students with minoritized identities, have particularly expressed an interest in building relationships with faculty that are validating and holistic (Santa-Ramirez, 2021). However, as mentioned previously, exerting this much energy is taxing to faculty who feel a sense of responsibility to develop those deeper relationships. Doctoral students, in particular, are an essential relationship given their potential to become peers. This relationship can become reciprocal by providing support and career opportunities for both the graduate student and early-career faculty. Unfortunately, many universities fail to prioritize these connections despite the numerous calls to include a deeper value on this service. Often deprioritizing is part of the anonymous tenure process, where no one is accountable, and change is therefore inaccessible.

Nameless-Faceless

The nameless-faceless aspect of organizational culture in academia refers to the various ways we are judged by anonymous peers and administrators, as well as the unknown entities to and for which we feel responsible (López and Morgan, 2021). The nameless-faceless aspect emphasizes two critical facets of faculty organizational culture. One is the obvious importance of being mentored by seasoned faculty and mentoring students who require affirming socialization into the academy, as described above. The age-old adage of lifting as we climb is fitting. The second significant facet of organizational culture is the impact of anonymity on an institution's interest in creating lasting change. Accepted nameless-faceless processes (i.e., tenure), "perpetuate a culture that promotes the toxicity of White supremacy and patriarchal society, promotes meritocracy, privileges competition and perfection in research, and upholds invalidation and isolation" (López and Morgan, 2021). In addition, the nameless-faceless aspect of academia impedes the process of relationship building that benefits institutions and faculty alike. Unmasking our evaluators and even counting them as mentors would contribute significantly to advancing equity in academia (López and Morgan, 2021).

COVID-19 Realities

The pandemic changed relationship building in ways we are only beginning to understand. Video conferencing for meetings, classes, and conferences demonstrated that we have the capacity to take relationship building into the virtual world. It also displayed the many inequities, whether due to faculty rank or minoritized identity, from being excluded further from the department's culture to concealing conditions that felt limiting (lack of privacy, etc.) to difficulty accessing an understanding of the technologies available. Yet, the pandemic has also allowed us to build relationships more efficiently if we are open to it and are adequately trained. The skills and knowledge acquired during the pandemic allow us to be in community and connection, regardless of where the person is geographically located. However, it also allows us to distance ourselves further from one another if we let it.

Minoritized Faculty Realities

Similar to how academic capitalism drives individualism by commodifying labor, via fostering "competition of scarce resources" (Kezar et al., 2019, 77), so too has the racial unrest of 2020 engendered self-preservation by commodifying the racial identities of faculty. Commodifying race would not be possible if there were not still fewer than 25 percent of faculty identifying as faculty of color (Guillaume and Apodaca, 2020). So, this is not new to the world of academia. However, the value of race in academia has been intensified through the racial unrest of 2020, either through a deepened understanding of those marginalized experiences or a performative reaction. Too often the latter is the reality, as exemplified by continued hiring practices. Commodifying race means that a person's identity is valued only for what it brings to a particular department, usually that is legitimacy as a department interested in appearing equitable and inclusive. Underlying this self-interest is the concern about scarcity of resources, something many faculty feel. However, this scarcity of resources is amplified and augmented by a scarcity of power for faculty of color, who are often the sole person with a minoritized identity in their department.

ACADEMIC CULTURE AND NEW FORMS OF FACULTY COSMOPOLITANISM AND LOCALITY

The rapid remaking of academic culture in relation to the events of 2020 is indeed striking but not without a historical trajectory. Sociologists and higher education scholars, in particular, have a legacy of astutely mapping the destruction and reconstruction of organizational and labor norms within the broader workplace, with postsecondary institutions leveraged as a prominent organizational archetype (e.g., Birnbaum, 1988; Slaughter and Leslie, 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004; Weick, 1976). Scholars have consistently demonstrated how the collective forces of globalization and neoliberalism as economic, political, and social orders have matured in ways that uniquely impact every facet of higher education, but especially in labor dynamics for faculty (and staff) and as a result, the culture within and between institutions (Cantwell, 2016; McClure, 2016; Torres-Olave et al., 2019). One prominent way to capture these shifting

realities at macro and micro levels has been to rely on the sociological insight of "cosmopolitans and locals" (Glaser, 1963; Gouldner, 1957; Rhoades et al., 2008)

This typology gathered research adherents who use the strong imagery the labels promote to disentangle the different ideologies, practices, and relationships shaping how laborers operate in modernizing societies. Accordingly, we ultimately extend the typology to assert that the continued fallout of the events of 2020 have intensified the normative distinctions of cosmopolitan and local faculty in some ways and upended the typology in other ways. In addition, we give special attention to disaggregated realities that have implications for minoritized faculty. What follows is a brief introduction to the concept and then a synthesis of studies that have leveraged the typology prior to 2020. Then we augment these insights with analysis from our own lived experiences to reveal how the postsecondary education institutional culture should be differently understood in light of the pandemic, political instability, and racial unrest.

Understanding the Typology: Cosmopolitan versus Local

Since the mid to late 20th century, sociologists (e.g., Gouldner, 1957, 1958; Hannerz, 1990; Merton, 1968) have contemplated the role of "cosmopolitans" and "locals" situated within a group structure to explain how social positioning within the groups affects both the individual and the culture. In other words, the cosmopolitan-local spectrum is a tool to help conceptualize how people influence each other and the extent to which they are attached to/detached from a particular locality or organization's cultural norms. Although Glaser (1963) argues for a less dualistic approach, the two concepts are often presented in opposition. Mindful of the reductionist nature of dualism, we review the two concepts separately but assert that a more spectrum, highly valent, and temporal understanding is necessary (Rhoades et al., 2008; Torres-Olave and Lee, 2020).

Cosmopolitans are understood as having a relatively high level of influence in their local contexts because of their specialized knowledge, credentials, and/or networks (Ossewaarde, 2007). Kanter (1995) crystalized the dimension of cosmopolitanism with the "three Cs"— concepts, competencies, and connections. This influence allows cosmopolitan workers somewhat

seamless entry into different contexts that value their specialties and Kanter would add and argue that these characteristics allow cosmopolitans access to a global world order as well. Within higher education research, Crumley-Effinger and Torres-Olave (2021) describe these individuals as "hypermobile academic elites," or

> academic workers whose employment conditions, national context, socioeconomic status, social identities, geographic location, or other related characteristics places them in a privileged position within their situational context. (9)

As a result of this mobility and desirability, cosmopolitans do not grow attached to their contexts, nor do they tend to seek and cultivate relationships with laborers with more local orientations (Gouldner, 1957, 1958; Ossewaarde, 2007).

On the other hand, locals have vast influence in a particular context because of the tight linkages in their social networks (Granovetter, 1973; Portes, 1998), or put differently, their high-level knowledge of other locals who share in their history and commitments to the locality. This shared and synergistic history of locals fosters a familiarity with the context that translates into a strong attachment and affinity for the cultural norms of a space (Ossewaarde, 2007). Locals value and make space for cosmopolitans because of how the cosmopolitans' specialized knowledge can enhance their temporarily shared context(s). However, the affinity cosmopolitans exhibit for locals is more muted because connections to locals or their shared context are not relevant to the cosmopolitans' goals or orientations.

Even before the pandemic, social scientists documented the rise of cosmopolitanism as a political (Brock and Brighouse, 2005), sociological (Kendall et al., 2009), and labor (Nail, 2015) reality that has had destructive consequences on locals and the cultural fabric of societal institutions (neighborhoods, churches, educational institutions, etc.). Ossewaarde (2007) cautions that the rise of cosmopolitism hastens a move toward a "society of strangers," which is defined by a collective experience of powerlessness, manifested in feelings of personal meaninglessness, loneliness, mistrust, insecurity and anxiety" (385). On the other hand, some scholars suggest that ideal forms of (critical) cosmopolitism, if achievable, can be an antidote for many of the cultural ailments that plague organizations and nation-states (Beck and Sznaider, 2006; Delanty, 2006; Moellendorf, 2011). With this brief backdrop, we turn our attention to the specific realities of

the cosmopolitan-local spectrum on the cultural realities of higher education and faculty in particular.

Cosmopolitan and Local Faculty Dynamics

In the late 1950s, Alvin Gouldner (1957, 1958) examined the relationship of 125 faculty to the roles at a liberal arts college. Gouldner identified three variables that were useful in placing faculty within the cosmopolitan-local spectrum: (1) organizational loyalty, (2) commitment to specialized skills, and (3) whether their reference group was within or beyond the institution. Later work, which we highlight below, muddies the strict utility of these variables, but the overarching assertion that considers whether faculty remain focused and put their energies inward to their institution or outward to a broader group of norms or colleagues (i.e., a discipline or scholarly community) is still the critical distinction that defines faculty locality or cosmopolitanism orientations.

In subsequent years, scholars have built out this line of inquiry to understand how faculty's labor norms contribute to the culture and operations of an institution (Torres-Olave and Lee, 2020). For instance, focusing on career types, Dowd and Kaplan (2005) identify and name four profiles of tenure-track careers (i.e., "probationer, maverick, conservationist, connector") that are mediated by whether a faculty is "boundaried or boundaryless," an iteration of the cosmopolitan-local spectrum within the career's literature (Inkson et al., 2012). In addition, Dowd and Kaplan (2005) note essential considerations for the types of faculty careers present within an institution or even within a departmental unit, which require varying support necessary to facilitate faculty success depending on how they are oriented along the cosmopolitan-local spectrum. However, the focus of this and related types of studies on tenure-stream faculty (e.g., Jubas and Kawalilak, 2012) largely sidesteps the issue of contingent faculty labor and other higher education research workers and how they are situated in the cosmopolitan versus local realties (Crumley-Effinger and Torres-Olave, 2021).

In contrast, Baker and Zey-Ferrell (1984) developed four major academic workstyles based on a variety of faculty members (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) reference group orientation across their teaching, research, and service commitments. They note that faculty

whose primary role at an institution is teaching are likely to be socially isolated from both local and cosmopolitan realities. With specific attention to how institutions and faculty might improve teaching, they argue that there must be "role alignments within a professor's workstyle" and "role negotiations among colleagues" necessitating "active local and cosmopolitan reference groups" (Baker and Zey-Ferrell, 1984, 104–105). This suggests that most faculty, regardless of how loosely or tightly coupled they are to the institution or their predominant roles within the institution, experience the push-pull of the relationships critical to locals and the specialized knowledge that cosmopolitans traffic in. The lines of research that parse out different faculty profiles provide nuanced ways to understand status and prestige matter that the cosmopolitan-local spectrum deepens (Kezar et al., 2019; Torres-Olave and Lee, 2020).

More squarely within the domain of higher education research, scholars have teased out relevant dynamics of the cosmopolitan and local faculty realities that present a much more nuanced consideration than original work. For instance, Rhoades and colleagues (2008) redefined the notion of cosmopolitan and local (e.g., local cosmopolitans and cosmopolitan locals) with a decided commitment to teasing out how race, class, gender, immigration background, and community engagement also factor into the typology. They argued for more acceptance of alternatives to professional norms, including calling for "a more balanced interpretation of the multiple characteristics and loyalties of professionals" (Rhoades et al., 2008, 232). O'Meara's work complements this nuance by focusing on faculty agency and calling for a more overarching engagement with the different ways that faculty's work is evaluated and valued, with respect to their cosmopolitan (e.g., traditional research and lecturing) and local (e.g., community-engaged scholarship and teaching) orientations (O'Meara and Niehaus, 2009).

In addition, Gonzales' (2012, 2013) work has helped to locate the cosmopolitan-local reality within different institutional types and how faculty's behaviors have shifted accordingly. Gonzales (2012) argues persuasively that institutional prestige influences the work habits of faculty by compelling them to adopt a more cosmopolitan style to gain legitimacy in the broader faculty milieu.

Revising the Cosmopolitan-Local Spectrum for Post-2020 Academic Culture Realities

Looking across the theory and research on cosmopolitan and local faculty, three themes—geography, student support, and research—are ripe for updating in response to the pandemic and other events of 2020. First, the cosmopolitan-local typology is explicitly built on a logic of geography tied to physical boundaries, human relationships, and temporal realities. Second, before 2020, the cosmopolitan-local typology acknowledged faculty mobility; shifting labor norms circumscribed by one's style and orientation; and relationships between institutions, faculty, and surrounding communities (e.g., Crumley-Effinger and Torres-Olave, 2021; Gonzales, 2012; Rhoades et al., 2008). However, what the existing literature does not engage as consistently, and the events of 2020 have made strikingly clear for many faculty, is how and to what extent the digital landscape influences the typology.

The swift and, at times, chaotic shift to remote work, concerns with employer surveillance, and technology challenges have all affected faculty realities and the academic culture in various ways that many are still trying to understand. Furthermore, the move of conferences to virtual formats and backlogs at journals and publication processes has changed how faculty can readily engage in typical research-related work. That does not account for how family care expectations and local/regional economic instability have also factored into faculty's lives post-2020.

Because of this pronounced shift to the virtual while still grappling with things as the way they were prior to 2020, it has both become easier and harder for faculty to engage in a broader community and with their institutions. Therefore, we would amend the normative cosmopolitan-local spectrum to include considerations for the quickly evolving digital realities shaping the organizational culture of institutions and disciplines as a whole (see Figure 1). Our argument to
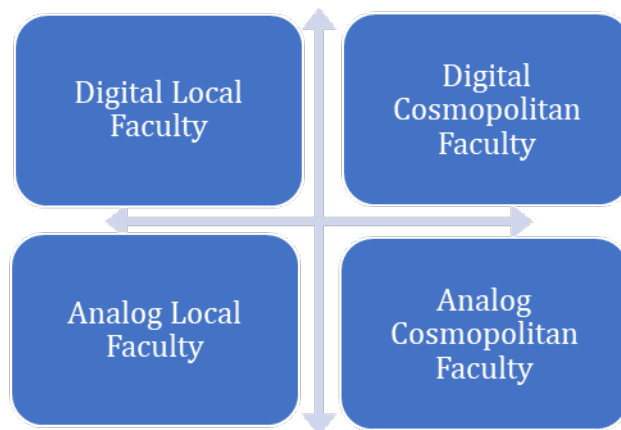

Figure 1: Cosmopolitan and Local Faculty in an intensified digital era.

support the updated typology is that the digital and remote norms that are now becoming commonplace further distinguish faculty not solely based on their local-cosmopolitan orientation but also based on their preferred style and ease of transition along a digital and analog spectrum. In this respect, digital refers to experiences mediated by a virtual medium (e.g., computer screen, internet, Zoom meeting). Whereas analog refers to nondigital experiences and encounters (e.g., face-to-face meetings).

Post-2020, digital faculty, regardless of their cosmopolitan and local orientation, have adapted well to remote work. They are comfortable with technology, and perhaps even "digital natives." Consequently, they can leverage digital shifts effectively within the context of their professional lives. These faculty have engaged more on social media, shifted to or increased their use of remote work platforms to support research or institutional committee work (e.g., Slack, Asana, group chats), and handle technology disruptions well. On the other side are analog faculty who are either more reticent in the shift to digital/remote work or have experienced hardships or challenges that make engaging in their faculty life in digital ways more challenging.

Nevertheless, how digital/analog faculty orient themselves is still bifurcated based on their relative orientation to their field/discipline versus their home institution. Hence, "digital cosmopolitan" faculty may be the least affected by the shifts in work culture and might actually be thriving with the ability to access new and different networks and sources of knowledge now that many more of their realities have a digital component. Furthermore, their technology familiarity becomes an additional form of specialized knowledge that distinguishes them from other faculty colleagues and curries favor with students in online learning environments. On the other hand, cosmopolitan faculty that are more analog in style may be experiencing challenges accessing professional networks and leveraging their expertise in formats that are different or harder to operate in (e.g., giving a virtual versus in-person lecture).

Similarly, "digital locals" may be thriving and adapting to new organizational norms that allow them to access students, faculty, and staff in new, more convenient and efficient ways; whereas "analog local" faculty are arguably the most affected by the pandemic-related shifts. This is because these faculty are best positioned when they are able to interface with colleagues and students in person (i.e., physically proximal) in ways that remote work makes challenging and the pandemic makes unsafe.

Minoritized Faculty Realities within an Emerging Cosmopolitan-Local Paradigm

It is critical to augment this revised typology for the unique realities of minoritized faculty. The literature highlights that minoritized faculty experience challenges related to teaching evaluations, access to mentoring supports, microaggressions and hostile work climates, and inconsistently operationalized tenure and research expectations (Croom and Patton Davis, 2012; Gonzales and Griffin, 2020; Kezar et al., 2019; Rhoades, 2017). Given these insights, we are especially struck by research that documents how hostile digital spaces can be for minoritized individuals (Madden et al., 2018) and faculty (Ferber, 2018). We acknowledge this is likely only to worsen in the aftermath of the racial unrest in 2020 and the backlash that manifested as an anti–critical race theory movement.

Our initial sense (and lived experience) is that there continues to be parallel realities for digital- and analog-minoritized faculty, regardless of their cosmopolitan or local orientation. That is, academic culture and society at large continue to present hostile climates for minoritized faculty and individuals that endanger their success and humanity. The main note within this typology is based on a faculty's level of engagement in digital spaces that might open them up to uniquely aggressive forms of digital harassment that more analog-minoritized faculty may be buffered from. More research is necessary to tease out the similarities and differences.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The connecting thread between our analyses of academic culture concerning relationship building and shifts in the faculty cosmopolitan-local typology is that small shifts in organizational norms are felt first and more intensely by faculty with minoritized identities. This is particularly salient in the review of faculty relationship building. Put differently, our synthesis of the related literature and collective sensemaking of our lived experiences over the past 18 months is that the academic culture both within our institutions and beyond is evolving at a more concentrated pace in some areas (i.e., relationships and orientations to faculty work) because of the events of 2020. However, we are struck both by how enduring challenges for minoritized faculty remain and the resilience brought forth to continue to adapt to issues that may not even

be deemed worthwhile by broader hegemonic forces until a later time, if at all. Hence, our view is that the events of 2020 have exacerbated preexisting realities for minoritized faculty in ways that cultivate a sense of isolation and invalidation that undermines the best features of academic life and calls into question its sustainability.

As a matter of intellectual contributions from this commentary, we present an updated understanding of how faculty are embedded within the academic organizational culture. It layers the local/cosmopolitan and digital/analog quadrants and locates the synergistic or competing nature of faculty navigating relationships (see Figure 2).

As instructors who have taught a graduate-level course on organizational theory and governance in higher education, one of the first themes we introduce in the course and revisit often is whether higher education is a business. Given the realities of what we eventually cover during the semester, most students respond with what amounts to "of course higher education is a business." However, while this view is innocent to the realities and complexities of the postsecondary education landscape, we maintain that higher education's espoused (although not realized) commitment to safeguarding and advancing the public good through knowledge production and preservation is its enduring and distinguishing characteristic. The extent to which the next normal can reorient the academic culture toward this enduring value while foregrounding inclusion, respect, and healthy labor dynamics, all the while disrupting systemic harms, the better off society will be.
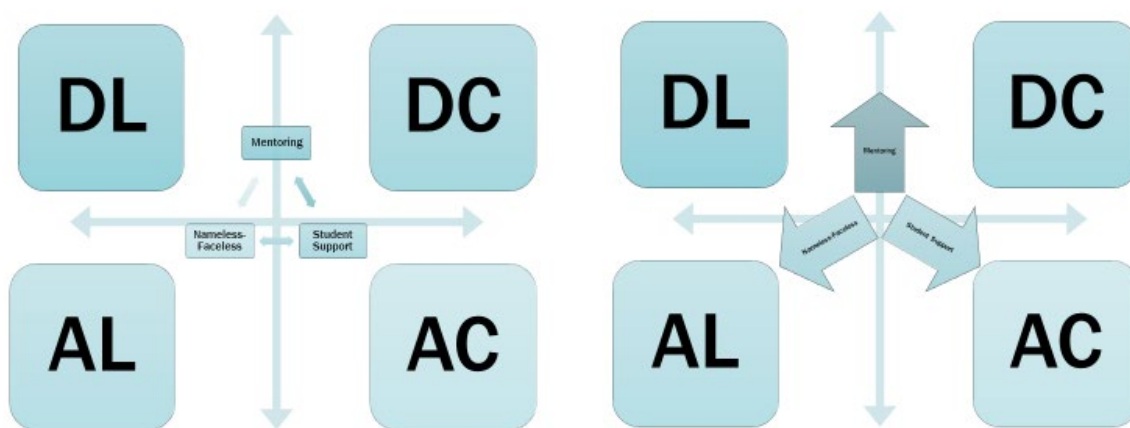

Figure 2: A typology of Emerging Organizational Realities for Faculty: Relationships (Mentoring, Nameless-Faceless, Student Support) x Context of Engagement (Analog v. Digital).

The question remains, though: Who or what is responsible for the work of changing academic culture when all the things that make the culture what it is are so hard to grasp and disentangle toward a different end, especially in light of nameless-faceless dimension, shifting relationships to technology, and coupling to home institutions versus one's discipline or field? Our esteemed discussant, Dr. Kiernan Mathews, summarized this dynamic as an "anony-mocracy," where the idealized pursuit and establishment of a meritocracy in academe clashes with the enactment of anonymity and its intensification in a digital era. This stands in contrast to what Dr. Morgan recently heard about an adage that is making its way around the corporate world, which is that there is no justification, from a business perspective, to bring up how things operated prior to the pandemic. The thinking is that facts and inputs have changed so rapidly and irrevocably that trying to get back to a sense of pre-pandemic normalcy potentially positions the business in an uncompetitive position. Hence, we caution a conclusion that welcomes the normalcy of the anony-mocracy and the perpetuation of the nameless-faceless simply because that broken system is what we were used to and facilitated success for some faculty to realize the best aspects of higher education.

Another vantage point is to view the differences between higher education as an enterprise and businesses whose primary animating feature is profit. As we have sought to lay out in this commentary, the organizational culture of higher education for faculty is complex. However, it remains ever so precariously oriented to what it is uniquely positioned to do (i.e., pursue and preserve knowledge for the public good). The question as higher education moves forward is whether a commitment and enactment to the public purposes of higher education can be cultivated while remaining adaptable to the changing trends and dynamics—especially for minoritized faculty and those in vulnerable labor positions. Our framework provides one such offering for updating how to locate and view faculty realities.

Based on these reflections and to merge insights from our focus area, we offer the following recommendations for institutional leaders (provosts, deans, chairs, faculty affairs), disciplinary and academic associations, and policy makers to consider paths forward that help bring about and sustain efforts to promote equity within the academy (Gonzales and Griffin, 2020):

- *Everyone* – To counteract the nameless-faceless phenomenon, all faculty and administrators should heed these recommendations. In the nameless faceless culture, this issue is no one's responsibility and no one is held accountable, and we must shift away from that cultural norm.
- *Institutional Leaders/Academic Organizations* – Work with institutional research offices to assess and then lead institution-wide conversations about the digital divides and realities that exist for faculty—that go beyond instructional supports.
- *Institutional Leaders* – Identify and highlight meaningful ways for contingent faculty to engage with the institution both remotely and physically.
- *Institutional Leaders/Academic Organizations* – Provide meaningful ongoing professional development and resource support for analog faculty in ways that maintain dignity.
- *Faculty* – Leverage the technological skills acquired during the pandemic to connect with others in ways that are intentional and holistic.

We invite others to continue this critical quest. In addition, given our experiences, we hope that these insights lead to tangible policies and practices changes that transform organizational culture toward the public good while redressing persistent harms that prevent higher education from reaching its full potential.

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