

ANNETTE KOLODNY



Failing the Future

A Dean Looks at Higher Education

in the Twenty-first Century

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Duke University Press Durham and London 1998

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First printing in paperback, 2000

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ☺

Typeset by Tseng Information Systems, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

appear on the last printed page of this book.

With the exception of those identified by name, throughout this book persons referred to as members of the University of Arizona community have been substantially altered in identity or redrawn as composites so as to protect the privacy of individuals.

Sections of several chapters originally appeared in the following:

"Colleges Must Recognize Students' Cognitive Styles and Cultural Backgrounds," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 6 February 1991, A44.

"Creating the 'Family-Friendly Campus,'" *The Family Track: Keeping Your Faculties While you Mentor, Nurture, Teach, and Serve*, ed. Constance Coiner and Diana Hume George (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

"Paying the Price of Antifeminist Intellectual Harassment," *Antifeminism in the Academy*, ed. Veve Clark, Shirley Nelson Garner, Margaret Higonnet, and Ketu H. Katrak (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 3-33.

"Raising Standards While Lowering Anxieties: Rethinking the Promotion and Tenure Process," *Concerns* 23, no. 2 (Spring 1993): 16-40.

"Setting an Agenda for Change: Meeting the Challenges and Exploring the Opportunities in Higher Education," *Transformations* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 5-30.

"'60 Minutes' at the University of Arizona: The Polemic against Tenure," *New Literary History* 27, no. 4 (Autumn 1996): 679-704.

"Why Feminists Need Tenure: Combatting the Right's Agenda," *Women's Review of Books* 13, no. 5 (February 1996): 23-24.

*With gratitude and affection, this book
is dedicated to my graduate students,
who keep teaching me new tricks.*

For us, the hope of intellectual independence is to resist, and the necessary first step in resistance is to discover how the institutional grip is laid upon our mind.

-Mary Douglas, *How Institutions
Think* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse
University Press, 1986), p. 92.

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Acknowledgments

As this project moved from handwritten journal entries, scattered articles, and miscellaneous notes, I incurred many debts of gratitude. A number of friends and colleagues listened with patience as I groped for clarity, recommending useful readings to help me along; others read early drafts of several chapters, offering helpful advice and raising pertinent questions. It is a pleasure to thank Cathy Davidson, Bonnie M. Davis, Alex Dunkel, Gary Fenstermacher, Rita R. Foy, Elissa Gelfand, Anne Hutchins-Tatum, Fred Kiefer, Susan Koppelman, Barbara Kosta, Lola Mapes, Naomi Miller, Angie Moreno, Debra Olson, Robert Pack, Susan Pack, Virginia Richardson, Roland Richter, Jeffrey Rivkind, Sheila Slaughter, Karen L. Smith, Linda Stapleton, Charles Tatum, John Taylor, Emily Toth, Tilly Warnock, and Amy Williamsen.

At an early stage of composition, the chapter on cognitive diversity benefited from review, comments, and materials provided by Richard D. Hallick, Christopher G. Johnson, and Mary Wildner-Bassett. Dennis Evans researched materials that went into a first draft of the chapter on setting an agenda for change. Keith Lehrer shared the audio cassette of his interview with Lesley Stahl and thus enabled me to compose the chapter on CBS's "60 Minutes" at the University of Arizona and the public debate over tenure; he was also warmly generous in reviewing the developing essay at different stages.

The chapter on antifeminist intellectual harassment owes a special

debt to the women who shared their stories, allowed me to use those stories, but preferred anonymity. The chapter could not have been written, however, without the kindness and cooperation of Jean Jew and Jane Schaberg, who exhibited extraordinary courage and dignity in terrifying situations.

Some of my first published articles on professional issues—articles that later became the basis of several chapters—were strengthened by the research and editing skills of my former graduate research assistants, Julia Balén and Ruthe Thompson. Their unflagging intelligence, care, and good humor turned that early work into pleasure.

As an unwieldy manuscript began to take shape as a book, Ellen Messer-Davidow went beyond friendship in helping me to focus and clarify, even when it meant putting aside her own book project. Gently but firmly, she identified awkward sentences and encouraged my candor.

The final manuscript was prepared for publication by my graduate research assistant, Chadwick Allen, who also helped me finish the research and who offered acute editorial suggestions for every chapter. In the process of working with me for over two years on this book, Chad became both colleague and friend. He was never less than an honest critic and an insightful reader.

It was a joy to work with the talented and supportive team put together by Duke University Press. I owe particular thanks to Paul Betz, the freelance copyeditor hired for this assignment, for his gentle ministrations to the manuscript; to Jean Brady for smoothly managing a tight production schedule; to Mary Mendell for letting down the drawbridge and, most of all, for her exquisite sense of style; to Emily Young for her enthusiasm and her creative approach to marketing; and, finally, to my editor, Reynolds Smith, for his encouragement, his sustaining faith in this project, and his many excellent suggestions for improving the manuscript.

My most profound debt of gratitude, as always, is to my husband, Daniel Peters. The effort to complete this book coincided with a prolonged period during which my rheumatoid arthritis worsened daily, leaving me increasingly fatigued, weak, and crippled. Few relationships survive the ongoing strain of one partner's demanding depen-

dency and the other's unending caretaking. But through it all, Dan kept us both going, no matter what burdens he had to shoulder. With his irreverent sense of humor and unfailing gentleness, he made me believe that he wanted only two things: to watch me get better and to keep loving me. His love has proven my most trustworthy medicine.

A Personal Preface: Reflections on Five Years in a Dean's Office

"I made some studies, and reality is the leading cause
of stress amongst those in touch with it."

—Spoken by the character "Crazy Trudy," in Jane Wagner's
The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life.

i.

In the summer of 1988, I left my position as professor of literature at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York, to become dean of the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona in Tucson. With that transition, I became responsible for the smooth functioning of seven departments, five programs, and two research centers. I oversaw an annual state-funded permanent budget of \$13 million and directly dispersed another \$4–\$5 million, allocated to me yearly by the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, to cover everything from the stipends for graduate student teaching assistants to the purchase of computers for the dean's office. With just under 200 full-time faculty attempting to serve the needs of the 22,000 students (both graduate and undergraduate) who enrolled each semester in humanities courses, the money was always tight. I was constantly juggling dollars—while begging for more. In addition to endless committee meetings and monthly deans' council marathons, two or three times each month, I met for an hour with the provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, the administrator to whom I reported and at whose pleasure I continued in my post as dean. The person who held that position changed repeatedly, however, so that in five years as dean I reported to five different acting, interim, or permanent provosts in succession.

Meanwhile, I had no time for scholarship or research beyond stolen hours on an occasional weekend, and books and articles that I wanted to read simply collected dust in the growing piles on my study floor.

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Even more troubling, I never had time to teach a course of my own, settling instead for a year of team-teaching an experimental undergraduate course and offering invited guest lectures or guest seminars in other people's classes. Friends and colleagues who knew how deeply I loved teaching and research often asked, with avid curiosity, whether I liked the move to administration. During my first year as dean, exhilarated by new challenges, I replied that I loved the job. By the end of my second year, I said I loved half the job and would happily chuck the rest. For the remainder of my five-year term, this continued to be my answer.

What had changed in those first two years was my growing alarm at the apparently intractable disjunction between the humanities faculty's sense of its educational mission and the view of the humanities disciplines among my fellow academic deans and within central administration. Gifted and talented humanities faculty members spoke of strengthening their majors with new courses and innovative curricula; they experimented with instructional technologies and taught them to the graduate students; and they developed cross- and interdisciplinary programs for both undergraduates and graduate students. For them, the humanities were vital and rigorous disciplines, the key to understanding the vast diversity of human culture over time and a tool for solving current social problems. For the scientists, engineers, and business people who controlled central administration, however, the humanities were what they had always been on this campus: a service unit, the place where engineering students were taught to compose grammatically correct sentences, the place where an international business major gained a smattering of some foreign language. Rarely did these colleagues in administration understand that classics, religious studies, English, and the like might be independent bodies of theory and knowledge, with valuable intellectual methods of their own to impart.

To be sure, the president and the provost who hired me had done so with the explicit understanding that the College of Humanities was now to take a more prominent role on campus and that, in order to accomplish this, the various humanities programs and departments needed to go through a process of both updating and upgrading. While other units on campus had benefited from years of internal and ex-

ternal investment, the humanities had been allowed to drift until, without adequate resources or institutional support, they had become stagnant. My job was to facilitate change. As I understood the task initially, I was to enhance the current faculty's ability to make significant contributions in teaching and research and to bring in new faculty, with fresh ideas and exciting research areas. This was the part of the job I loved. But as the first year stretched into the second, these activities occupied less than half my time.

By January 1989, the provost who had recruited me the previous April left to take up the presidency of another institution. Thus, after only six months in the dean's office, I lost my best mentor. By the end of my second year, burgeoning enrollments coincided with deep cuts in state funding so that the campus found itself running a deficit. The president who had hired me—a deeply cultured man, genuinely committed to the arts—was under pressure from the Board of Regents to resign. The humanities' turn had come—but too late. Given the financial realities and his own precarious political situation, even a supportive president was in no position to shield my college's budget from the ax.

The unending scramble to protect precious resources, the demands of an aggressive fundraising campaign, and the wearying efforts to justify the importance of the humanities to central administrators who only cared about the bottom line had now become more than half the job. It was the half I hated.

Although I still managed to fund the recruitment of new faculty, personally meeting all the finalist candidates who came to campus, and although I still met with a variety of faculty committees, in fact, I was becoming increasingly isolated from the company I most craved—my faculty colleagues. Despite my "open door" policy, most faculty saw me infrequently, and few had any idea of how I spent my time. Only rarely did I find a few free minutes to walk the halls and strike up easy conversations about books and students. Only seldom could I save an hour to sit in on a class or attend a colleague's public lecture. Instead, I was trapped in my office, mired in budget numbers, or trapped in administrative meetings called to deal with the latest threatened budget cut. When I socialized during the weekends, it was more often at fundraising events to cultivate potential donors than at dinners with faculty whose books I was hoping to read or whose archeological digs

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had intrigued me. Too often frantic with overwork, I missed shmoozing with friends about ideas; I missed the passionate give-and-take of a good intellectual argument.

I also missed the comfort of a job where the expectations were limited and clear. As a faculty member, I always understood how many courses I was to teach and what level of research and publication was required for advancement. I knew my obligations to mentor graduate students and to volunteer for service on university committees. But a dean, I found, is expected to be an "all purpose" administrator, performing a multitude of functions, meeting with all constituencies and responding to every individual, even with inadequate staff to support her. Faculty and administrators alike want her to continue to be visible as a distinguished scholar in her field, so that she can bring added prestige to the institution, and they want her to speak with knowledgeable authority on behalf of all of the disciplines in her college. Yet they also want her to be an accomplished administrator, articulating large visions while always on top of the smallest detail. What constitutes an accomplished administrator, however, is always in the eyes of the beholder. The faculty want a fighter who can protect their disciplinary interests, while central administration wants a team player who is sensitive to the needs of the campus as a whole. Faculty want a dean committed to collegial and shared decision-making. Central administration demands that the dean make tough independent decisions, even if that means countering faculty sentiment. Department heads want a dean who will provide all requested resources and then leave them alone to conduct department business as they see fit. Central administration wants a dean to ride herd on department heads, micromanaging them in the same manner that central administration is attempting to micromanage the dean. Donors are looking to back an articulate leader, but many of them also want to be consulted at every juncture or wooed with tickets to major athletic events. Undergraduates rightly complain that, except for ceremonial occasions like Honors Convocation or graduation, deans are invisible. Graduate students want the dean who is a distinguished scholar to teach their seminars and direct their Ph.D. dissertations. And everyone expects the dean to shape a vision for the college, especially when faculty, staff, and students are deeply divided over what that vision should encompass.

As creatures of the governors who appoint them (or, in some states, the voters who elect them), Boards of Regents shift priorities along with the prevailing political winds, and what they want in a dean changes accordingly. The board in place when I first arrived in Arizona—a board mostly appointed by proeducation Democratic governors—demanded a greater representation of women and minorities in administrative positions (pressure that surely influenced my own hiring and, four years later, the hiring of the first Hispanic to serve as president of an AAU Research-I university); and that board wanted deans to diversify the faculty and improve graduation rates for minority students. As that board was replaced by the appointees of an antieducation Republican governor, deans got the message that affirmative action programs were now suspect (see Healy A58). In league with the conservative members of the Board of Regents, fiscally conservative state legislators want deans who will keep faculty “in line” and increase their teaching but not their pay.

What seems to escape these regents and legislators is that, above all, faculty simply want a dean who gives them the resources to teach well and decent salaries that at least keep pace with inflation. By contrast, cost-conscious regents, conservative elected officials, and a financially strapped administration all want a dean who disburses as little money as possible.

Position announcements for senior academic administrators—from deans to presidents—often list “stamina” and “energy” as job requirements. They should also list the capacity to tolerate cognitive dissonance, that is, the capacity to live with simultaneous competing and mutually exclusive work demands. Each of them *urgent*.

Even during the best of times, a dean’s job is fraught with conflict and contradictions. But during periods of crisis and financial uncertainty, the dean’s job becomes impossible. The fact is, as the budget crunch got worse, I found myself disappointing every constituency and every individual. It was often a tightrope act to keep a significant donor on board when some pet project of his had to be set aside for more pressing priorities. In a college deeply committed to affirmative action—an atmosphere that I had worked hard to encourage—it was painful to limit the number of minority scholarships when so many students were deserving. And in a society bred on rising expect-

tations, it was difficult to explain to faculty and staff why this would be another year without raises. To this day, I remember the palpable hurt and anger of a new acting department head who felt I hadn't given her a sufficient raise for taking on administrative duties. In fact, compared to other faculty, she was already earning well above rank, and she had no interest in hearing about the other desperate priorities that I had traded away in order to get the provost to approve her salary increase in a year when there were none for anyone else. Her friendship and her support both cooled. In ways I never anticipated, in the half of the job I was coming to detest, the professional had turned personal. To my dismay, I learned how easily academic culture divides into the "us" and "them" of faculty and administration.

ii.

So why did I go into administration? To begin with, I had become impatient with feminist studies of academe that cataloged unfair promotion and tenure practices or that analyzed how university decision-making structures continued to marginalize female and minority staff and faculty. Too often these analyses settled for the conclusion that, because power structures in the university are always contingent and provisional, they are available to change. "The way things always were," in other words, did not mean the ways things had to be in the future. Unfortunately, the potentially liberating insight of such studies seemed to me muted by the lack of concrete plans of action. Feminist academics were very smart about identifying problems, but we seemed less eager to take on the positions of power within academe that might allow us to solve those problems. In consequence, our repeated assertion of the proposition that change is both needed and possible had done little to alter the status quo. As one of those feminist academics I have just described, I felt vaguely like a hypocrite.

I also went into administration because I was losing confidence in the people willing to take on these jobs. With prominent exceptions, too many academic administrators see administration as a career ladder, and their eyes are always focused on the next rung up. This leaves some career administrators wary of creativity and shy of experimentation. Any rocking of the boat might jeopardize the next promotion. Even in a period of massive transitions in academe, rather than seeing

themselves as change agents, hesitant administrators try to contain change by settling for incremental alterations and minute accommodations. Quick fixes and Band-Aids. Divorced from their prior research and teaching commitments, academic administrators are often incapable of explaining to governing boards or to the general public just what it is that faculty do—and why it's important. As a result, in the face of legislative funding cuts or calls to close academic programs, too many administrators either capitulate quietly or respond with a muddled defensiveness. Indeed, I have yet to come across any senior administrator willing to go public with the fact that quality education costs money and that anything less than the highest quality education—especially in these globally competitive times—is money wasted.

With characteristic *chutzpah*, I was sure I could do better.

I especially wanted to do better at what most administrators have nervously termed “managing diversity.” As Arthur E. Levine, president of Teachers College at Columbia University, has revealed, “When talked with confidentially and asked candidly what they would like to see happen with the issue, most senior administrators use the same language. They would like to see it go away” (Levine 337). But since my own entry into the professoriate almost thirty years ago represented part of the diversification process—women professors having been few and far between during my college years—I have never been inclined to see the inevitable demographic shifts in the faculty and student body as a problem. Instead, I entered academic administration with a pragmatic agenda. Given the fact that “new entrants to the labor force [will] increasingly come from the ranks of minorities, immigrants, and women” (Callan 18), I saw an opportunity for defining at least one clear and pressing role for public universities: they needed to work with primary and secondary schools on developing innovative programs that could ensure this cohort's eventual entry into higher education. After all, as a 1987 Hudson Institute report made clear, “the capacity of states to compete for high-wage industries and jobs depend[s] in no small part on the skill and competence of these emerging workers” (Callan 18). If only for self-serving economic interests, therefore, states will need to fund the programs that can educate the new workers of the twenty-first century.

Especially in a state like Arizona—with its large Native American

and Mexican American populations and its continuing immigration from Mexico and Latin America—this was an argument I was eager to make.

Because the academic dean functions at the juncture where faculty and student needs, aggregated into programs and departments, intersect with collective transinstitutional imperatives like resource allocation and public relations, that position struck me as the critical administrative point at which meaningful change might be effected. So I accepted a deanship at a large research university where both faculty and central administration claimed they wanted substantive change (even if they did not entirely agree on what needed to be changed or how). In facilitating that stated desire for change, I hoped to test my hypothesis that, once given a position of recognized decision-making authority, a feminist committed to both equity and educational excellence could prove an instrument for progressive evolution.

I made myself comfortable with what appeared to be a sudden career swerve by announcing, soon after the job had been offered, that I intended to remain a dean for only a single five-year term (which I did). Because I had never before been an administrator—not even a department chair—and because I had no aspirations to remain an administrator, I hoped I might function with greater boldness and creativity than career administrators who trimmed their sails to the safest course. My lack of prior administrative experience, I hoped, would push me to rely on the considerable expertise of a seasoned and hardworking staff; and it would, as well, I hoped, prompt me to work collaboratively with faculty, just as I had done when I was one of them. Collaborative relationships with faculty and staff might even help me to experiment with innovative problem-solving mechanisms.

I was, of course, extremely naive as I went into the job. None of my four campus visits and the many meetings with students, staff, faculty, and other administrators had prepared me for the severity of the looming budget crisis. I never anticipated the killing hours that my activist agenda would require of me. And I significantly overestimated the capacity for change in a college that, for too long, had practiced the strategies of complaint and resistance. After years of underfunding and neglect from central administration, most humanities faculty members were distrustful of any administrator, while ancient person-

ality clashes within some departments had festered into ongoing feuds and hardened factions. Even if I was naive, however, entries from my personal journal, composed during the on-campus interviews, indicate that I was not wholly ignorant of what lay ahead.

iii.

Room 23, The Lodge on the Desert,

Tucson, Arizona

11 P.M., February -, 1988

I am being interviewed for a job that can't be done. This is my second visit to the campus, and the search committee has made it clear that I'm their top candidate. The provost is even more straightforward: "What do we need to do to get you here?" I like him enormously. But, as I see it, the job just isn't doable. The Board of Regents is putting pressure on the three state universities to hire more women and minorities on the faculty and in the administration. I'm sure that's part of the reason they pursued me so eagerly at the outset, and it certainly creates a helpful atmosphere in which to develop affirmative action strategies. But the very fact that there are so few senior women on the faculty, and even fewer minority members across the faculty ranks; and the fact that, given the culturally diverse population of Arizona, women and minorities are so few in number within the administration suggests there's solid resistance, not just inaction.

Do I really want to take on this battle? Because it will be a battle. The president says all the right things to me about affirmative action—he's determined to see the school's statistics change in that area—but the policies aren't in place to make it happen.

The killer, though, is going to be the budget. Since I'm still only a candidate, very little budget data has been shared with me. But this much is clear: the College of Humanities has been chronically underfunded, meaning it would take a huge commitment of resources to alleviate the growing problem of salary compression¹ and hire the requisite number of new faculty needed to accommodate what looks like a 35 percent increase in student enrollments—with even greater student numbers predicted for the future. The Humanities are housed in old-fashioned, poorly designed buildings, with insufficient office

space and just the scant beginning of a modern language learning laboratory, with interactive computers. Two and three faculty members share offices sized for a single occupant, and the new language laboratory can handle only a fraction of the students enrolled in the introductory foreign languages courses. So it's clear they need to renovate the present building and probably build a new one, as well. But I'm already told that state revenue bonding will take years—and no one has ever considered putting the Humanities on the capital plan for any kind of new facilities. At one of my meetings with a group of faculty, someone complained that there isn't even chalk in the classrooms. Several of his colleagues concurred. These people are angry.

I'm picking up a lot of anger and suspicion. Faculty in the smaller-sized departments feel that the huge English Department has received the lion's share of the resources, to the detriment of the smaller units, and there's fear that, as an American literature specialist, I'll continue to favor that department as dean. The English Department, in turn, has been burdened with the sole responsibility for all composition instruction, but its funding levels for graduate teaching assistants have remained inadequate, even in the face of increasing freshman enrollments. As a result, their underpaid graduate students burn out from a two-thirds-time teaching load and don't complete their degrees. Someone whispered that the attrition rate among the Ph.D. candidates is 99 percent in some years.

I checked the enrollment figures and discovered what look like gross disparities between departments. In some units, all faculty teach two courses each semester, regardless of the numbers of students enrolled. In other departments, faculty teach three or even four courses in a semester, some heavily enrolled. And none of this appears to correlate to research activity or to publication productivity. At first glance, it looks like these patterns developed over many years and then just calcified. I don't think differences in fields or disciplinary distinctions explain all the disparities.

Then there's the faculty. What they really want is a dean who can bring in substantial new resources and walk on water. Make needed changes but offend no one. There are factions, deep divisions, animosities that surface briefly in every open meeting—but nothing I can really define or get a handle on.

But what keeps surprising me is how few people know anyone outside their own department or program. There seems to be no shared sense of participation in a larger College of Humanities; instead, I see only departmental loyalties and interdepartmental rivalries.

Something else divides this faculty: the period in which they were hired and the expectations that were set for them. Some came when only good teaching was required for tenure, and few of these individuals were given the incentive or the opportunity to develop any kind of research or publication agenda. They are tenured, most trapped in the associate rank; they know they will never be recruited by any other institution; they teach with continued devotion despite all, and volunteer for committees. But they are suffering from salary compression and know there's nothing they can do about it. They are not going to attract outside offers to use as bargaining levers for increasing their salaries here. And they are becoming frustrated and alienated. For them, the rules changed when the University of Arizona aspired to become an AAU Research-I institution. At that point, another kind of faculty member was sought: someone who both taught and published. The school wanted prestige beyond its championship basketball and football teams. But because the university's initial emphasis was on upgrading the sciences and professional schools, the publication requirements for this new group in the humanities were never strict. Some published energetically, others only enough to get tenure. In more recent years, as the University of Arizona's humanities graduate programs grew and the job opportunities in the humanities declined, a few senior, well-published "stars" were hired. And the departments were also able to attract junior faculty with promising research credentials from first-rate institutions. In addition to teaching well, new faculty were now expected to publish actively and win research fellowships from prestigious foundations. The stakes had been raised and, as a result, the newest junior hires have almost nothing in common with some of the most senior people in their departments, the very people who should be their mentors and who will, eventually, decide on these younger colleagues' tenure and promotion. The fissures between these very different groups of faculty do not bode well for building any sense of community here.

If I take this job, this is where I'll have to learn to walk on water. If

I aggressively go after outstanding women and minority faculty hires at prevailing market rates, some of them will come in as untenured assistant professors earning salaries comparable to tenured associate professors who have been here fifteen or twenty years. If I don't persuade central administration to provide me the salary levels necessary to compete, then affirmative action hiring is a dead issue. But, at the same time, if I don't get equity money for those suffering from salary compression, then the new hires are going to come into an environment of resentment and jealousy. Salaries here are public information—and lots of angry faculty will examine the big book at the front desk of the main library.

As I'm beginning to understand it now, the problem is this: it's really not a lot of faculty on any campus who, on principle or because of ingrained prejudice, oppose affirmative action hiring. But that minority can be vocal. The more dangerous group is that large mix of angry and alienated faculty who have no particular objection to affirmative action but who suffer year after year from salary compression and now watch some newly minted woman or minority Ph.D. come in at a salary near (or even higher) than the tenured associate professor's. The associate professor sees himself as exploited and unrewarded, despite his years of good teaching and active campus citizenship. And this same associate professor then finds himself falling in with those who oppose affirmative action, even if he doesn't agree with their arguments. It's a dangerous mix, and it's potentially volatile not because diversifying the faculty, by itself, causes problems. In fact, where it's begun, the personal relationships appear friendly. The situation is volatile because older underpaid faculty suspect that the higher salaries paid to women and minorities are coming at their expense. For this group of faculty, the manifest benefit of bringing to campus talented young teachers and scholars from divergent cultural and intellectual traditions is overshadowed by what now seems to them an issue of fairness in salary distribution. And if not addressed, this will be the unraveling of affirmative action.

I ask myself, Is this a battle I want to take on at the University of Arizona, where the central administration keeps making contradictory sounds about the Humanities? Yes, they want me to pursue affirmative action hiring policies—that's one of the reasons they're inter-

ested in me as a candidate for the deanship; they think I might actually get the job done. And yes, they also want to see the humanities departments and programs attain the stature and national visibility of some of the science programs. But resources are getting tighter, everyone tells me. I can't expect significant budgetary increases any time soon, even the provost warns.

Everybody wants everything, but nobody wants to pay for it. And the faculty are harboring impossible expectations for this new dean.

iv.

Room 25, The Lodge on the Desert,
Tucson, Arizona
10:30 P.M., March -, 1988

When I called home last night, I told Dan I wouldn't touch this job with a ten-foot pole. Tonight, however, I am tempted; and as I packed for the flight back to Albany a while ago, I admitted to myself that, impossible though the job is, I want to give it a try. Two things changed my mind. The director of the University of Arizona's well-established Women's Studies Program gave a dinner for me tonight at her home and invited not only faculty women but a few women from the community, as well. I liked them all, and their considerable numbers gave me the sense that I wouldn't be alone here. There seems to be a strong women's community, friends I could turn to, and they're all urging me to come. But what really changed my mind was the women's studies director's comment as I was leaving. I was telling her how demanding the job seemed, how many things needed to be done. "But you don't have to do them all at once," she replied. And suddenly it didn't seem quite so impossible.

v.

After only a few months as dean, one realization brought me up short: by joining the middle management of academic administration, I came to know the functioning of a large research university in a way that had never been available to me previously. Not even as a faculty member who served on myriad committees at a variety of institutions and not even as someone who had held elected executive

positions in national professional and scholarly organizations. However engaged I was in campus life, as a faculty member I had had only a limited understanding of how any institution functioned, from its budget to its relationships with different political constituencies. What I realized with a shock as dean, in other words, was how abysmally ignorant most faculty—including myself—really are about the workplace in which they function.

The price we pay for such ignorance is the faculty's inability to respond effectively during periods of crisis. By not understanding how a public university is financed in any given state, faculty fail to grasp why there may be money to erect a new building but none for correcting salary compression.² By not knowing about the multiple and often conflicting constituencies that compete to shape the president's agenda, faculty are at a loss to assess accurately the rationale behind some new policy move or public speech. Such ignorance makes a sham out of the concept of shared governance, and it leaves faculty focusing their frustration on the dean, the provost, or the president as the closest cause for the problems they're suffering. Even more dangerous, such ignorance also leaves faculty views vulnerable to dismissal by governing boards and state legislators. In their eyes, faculty appear both uninformed and naive. As one member of a Board of Regents in the southwest put it recently, "For some reason, the faculty hasn't quite got it. There are some tough times ahead" (Lamplot 8).

But the fact is, what the faculty lacks is not an apprehension that there are "tough times ahead." Budget cuts have wracked every campus in this country, and most of the professoriate is bracing for more to come. What faculty at most schools do not have is a comprehensive grasp of the budget details and the ways in which different kinds of monies are allocated on a campus. Without this kind of information and without clear signals about future financing possibilities, how are faculty—as this regent asks—to "work with the institutions to come up with additional budget-cutting ideas" (Lamplot 8)? Given the predictions of substantially increased student enrollments in the next decade, perhaps the more apt question might be how faculty can work with administrators, university development officers, and governing boards to secure the funding needed to sustain quality education into the next century. Unfortunately, the kind of cooperation implied by

the second question is one in which most of the professoriate cannot yet meaningfully engage, however much they may want to.

During my years as dean, the situation began to reach a crisis point for faculty as legislative calls for disciplining university budgets targeted faculty salaries and tenure protections. The increasing costs of college and university tuition since the 1980s were attributed to rising faculty salaries in the popular press; and, in a wild leap of logic, some called for limiting tenured positions as a response. But as I learned from scrutinizing the salaries of faculty in the College of Humanities at the University of Arizona and at other peer institutions, faculty salary averages had not even kept pace with inflation. The more important sources of rising costs were the institution's investments in improving educational quality, equipping state-of-the-art computer laboratories for undergraduates, and purchasing new technologies to make the library user-friendly. As the student body became more diverse, a new range of student support services was required, and this too cost money. Retrofitting old buildings to make them handicapped-accessible—mandated both by the Americans with Disabilities Act and by schools' genuine commitments in this area—drained capital improvement budgets. And the desire to ensure access for talented low-income students proved increasingly expensive as federal supports dwindled while the student need for financial aid increased. To make up the difference, most colleges and universities reached deep into their own pockets. All these—and not overblown faculty salaries—accounted for the escalating costs of a college education, I learned. But most faculty in the College of Humanities—like me a year earlier—did not possess sufficient information to make those arguments.

Shaken by the recognition of what had been my own level of ignorance, in the dean's office I found myself eager to share every bit of information with faculty, department heads, program directors, and staff. I wanted them to become informed and active partners with me in devising budget strategy and determining policy. My openness cost me the resignation of one of my associate deans, who resisted the inclusion of support staff in policy and personnel discussions and warned against sharing confidential material with secretaries. His leaving was a real loss to the office, but I stubbornly persisted. I used dean's office staff meetings for information-sharing and strategy ses-

sions; I briefed department heads and program directors on all agenda items from deans' council meetings; and I developed a large, inclusive faculty advisory group charged with making recommendations on everything from faculty workload policy to promotion and tenure procedures to budget allocations. All groups also met with one another and with the rest of the faculty, my aim being to involve everyone in collective problem-solving.

In every instance, I distributed all the information and hard data that were available to me, and I discovered, in turn, that I received equivalently useful information from those with whom I was meeting. Everyone—staff and faculty alike—had their own unique observations and thoughtful analyses. Together, as we pooled resources and data, we defined problems more clearly, and solutions emerged that had both logic and persuasiveness.

When I complained to a staff member one day that I missed the classroom, she replied that I was still a teacher. "You're using the dean's office as your classroom now," she continued, "and you're teaching everyone how the university runs." I was deeply comforted by her analogy, and it has remained with me, prompting me nowadays to plead—wherever I have a public forum—for the restructuring of graduate education. As institutions of higher learning experiment with new forms of organization, governance, budgeting, and decision-making, it is incumbent on us to prepare the next generation of professors for meaningful participation in those changes. We simply cannot continue training prospective faculty for their roles as teachers and researchers while altogether ignoring their responsibilities as citizens in a profession. The literature Ph.D. whom we train today will not simply spend her professional life sitting in a library and teaching small classes of freshman composition students. Even in graduate school, we need to provide advanced Ph.D. candidates with data and with an informed understanding of national educational issues. Only then can we empower faculty to silence those who would like to continue claiming, "For some reason, the faculty hasn't quite got it" (Lamplot 8).

vi.

The memory that most vividly persists from my five years as dean is of recalculating the budget figures, yet again, to accommodate

still another 3 percent cut in state funding. In addition to the state cuts, in some years there were newly discovered deficits in other areas of the university's finances, thus leaving central administration desperate to figure out how much money we actually had to work with. At the worst interval, the college deans had to feverishly recalculate our operating budgets halfway into the academic year, wondering in December if we could meet our spring semester instructional obligations. Whatever the calendar for cuts, however, the deans were called upon to provide endless budget projections to cover endless eventualities. Consolidation, internal reallocation, and returning money to a nervous central administration—always under impossible deadlines—became the order of the day. Semester after semester, year after year.

What no one ever even attempted to quantify in this process was the enormous waste of human time and energy. In some semesters, fully half of my associate dean's activity was given over to preparing budget recommendations. Joining the associate dean in that effort were the department heads, program directors, and various faculty oversight committees. And because the numbers provided by central administration never coincided with our own, an already overburdened support staff—in the departments and within the dean's office—worked overtime to assemble the requisite data or double-check the latest enrollment figures. For months at a time, in consequence, everything else that was important to us—curriculum renewal, designing mentorship programs for undergraduate and graduate students, recruiting new faculty—got put on hold. For me, with an energetic agenda that I kept refusing to abandon, the university's chronic budget difficulties played out like agonizing bouts of paralysis.

By my third year as dean, I understood why large public universities seemed so stodgy, so resistant to change. It wasn't ossified bureaucracies, administrative ineptitude, or faculty sloth—as legislators and media so often charged. Rather, it was the endless preoccupation with one budget crisis after another that was threatening my own college's ability to direct our attention to the goals we had set for ourselves. Repeatedly, the faculty advisory committee charged with developing policy on faculty workloads had to divert its attention to a review of complicated budget proposals. Faculty preparing to train graduate students in the latest technologies for computer-assisted instruction

found themselves without the promised equipment when the university suddenly froze capital purchases. Support staff who had volunteered significant energy and creativity to reconfiguring office assignments so that departments and the dean's office might work more efficiently together were stopped dead in their tracks when central administration announced a moratorium on filling vacant secretarial lines.

Ironically, many of the activities thwarted by these repeated budget crises were designed to pare costs and consolidate assignments. The College of Humanities' efforts to reconfigure job descriptions and develop better teamwork represented current investments of time for the sake of long-term permanent future savings in personnel and equipment. But the crisis management demanded by midyear state rescissions and local budget deficits made this kind of reasoned planning impossible.

What frustrated me most, however, was the duplicity of it all. Predictably, the provost would demand that cuts be made in such a way as "to protect academic quality," or some similar wording. Even in the face of constantly rising enrollments, the president and the provost were quick to reassure the public that the university would absorb year after year of substantial funding cuts without jeopardizing the quality of education. The assurances were patently absurd, of course, and they were especially absurd in the College of Humanities, a unit with a long history of inadequate funding. When departments could not even purchase annual service contracts for antiquated copiers, and when part-time student workers were being employed to replace full-time secretaries whom we could no longer afford, the only place left to make cuts was the instructional budget. Class sizes increased, and faculty began to burn out from the overload.

My frustration finally erupted in two recurring bad dreams. In one, I am reminding the provost that we have renegotiated the contracts of the graduate teaching assistants from two-thirds-time to half-time or twenty hours per week. If we now add twelve more students to each freshman composition section, as he is demanding, then the graduate teaching assistants, who teach two sections each semester, will have their workload increased by a third or more. They will no longer be

able to prepare and teach their courses, grade the weekly papers, and hold sufficient office hours all within twenty hours. And if, in order to compensate for the higher numbers of students, we substantially reduce the number and complexity of writing assignments in freshman composition courses, then we vitiate the very purpose of those courses. But the provost doesn't want to hear any of this. He orders me to cut the graduate programs, increase enrollments in freshman composition, and *make* the numbers "add up."

In the second bad dream, I am meeting with yet another provost, boasting to him of the success of one of our larger departments which has worked for two years to completely redesign its graduate program in order to shift more tenure-track faculty into woefully understaffed undergraduate courses. As a reward for the department's considerable efforts—which will require some faculty to retool and others to develop new undergraduate curriculum—I am petitioning the provost for an exemption from the current hiring freeze so that the department can search for the linguistics specialist it so desperately needs. I argue that the department in question has several funded vacant faculty lines and, in any case, the savings in instructional monies combined with the increased undergraduate enrollments to be realized from the curricular overhaul will more than pay for the new assistant professor position. And I want to reward the department, by some concrete gesture, for its good work. But this provost never offers incentives or rewards. A firm believer in the threat of dire consequences when faculty won't toe the line, he replies only that "they shoulda done it years ago." No matter how hard I try, I can't seem to make him understand the *human* toll that change exacts and the need for positive institutional response.

What makes these bad dreams unique is that there was no relief upon waking. For almost five years, I made these and similar arguments to one provost after another, week after week, semester after semester. What I was asking for was breathing space. For a limited time, I pleaded, the College of Humanities needed to be buffered from the constant budget crises in order to take stock, set a reasonable agenda for itself, and begin the process of planning for change. Given this buffer, there would be savings and consolidations, I promised.