

Angela Browne-Miller, *Shameful Admissions: The Losing Battle to Serve Everyone in Our Universities*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers) 1996. Pp. 276. \$28.00.

Shameful Admissions—a timely undertaking—addresses a wide range of theses and issues facing higher education. Its author asks: Should everyone really go to college? What are our colleges and universities not telling us about any less than positive changes in the quality of the education they offer? Is a college education really all it is cracked up to be? What is higher education really about?

The title immediately draws intellectual and emotional battle lines between those readers who believe that diversity is essential to educational quality and those who contend that diversity threatens the traditional ideals of the academy. Browne-Miller seems thoroughly convinced that in increasing diversity, universities are diminishing the quality of the education they offer.

Her rhetorical questions further imply that colleges and universities might be withholding important information about the quality of their programs. Moreover, she questions the very nature and relevance of higher education. She concludes by offering what she claims are her views on developing college curricula, without crediting universities for having worked tirelessly to do precisely what she says they should do. She goes to great length, meandering occasionally, to provide support for her notion that diversity is the root of all evil. Even when her interviewees made positive and compelling statements that should have caused her to reconsider her anti-diversity views, she incongruously draws negative conclusions that bolster her position. After one such interview she wrote, "Whatever the interpretation, color grading, stereotyping, and other developments behind the broken gate do appear related to increasing diversity on college campuses."

Her approach is provocative and seemingly insensitive at times. She seems particularly oblivious to the need for universities to enroll students from diverse socioethnic backgrounds. At times her skillful use of emotionally charged terminology distracts from the substance of her opinions. In addition to the title, *Shameful Admissions*, she refers to "the nasty problem of fairness," "the broken gate," "erosion of intellectual rigor," "slinking toward the mean," and

“the plight of the bright.” Her style verges on race-baiting.

Her narrow focus on ethnic diversity suggests a lack of understanding of the broad concept of diversity. I found no indication that the author understands that diversity, i.e., variety of stimuli, is a fundamental and inherent quality of education and of its complex process. She makes no mention of diversity of thought, diversity of teaching and learning styles, diversity of ideas and perspectives. It seems not to have occurred to her that human beings are the physical media essential to teaching and learning processes and that the presence of an ethnically diverse group of students in any classroom is as essential to teaching and learning as anything or any quality the assigned instructor might bring to class.

In addition to incongruences between the stories the author presents and the conclusions she draws, there are some interesting gaps in logic. According to her, the assumption seems to be that the rebalancing of social equality has never existed. The second observation is that if equality cannot be achieved during four years of college, it certainly will not be achieved without a college education. How, then, might “shameful admits” ever earn the respect of elitists?

The glaring absence of historical background—the total lack of connection between the past and present—compromises the credibility of Browne-Miller’s work. It is noteworthy that in the beginning of her book, she uses quotations from the *Communist Manifesto*. She makes no effort to even suggest that vestiges of America’s past should be considered in our approach to college admissions today. Moreover, her tunnel vision on the traditional academy excludes any consideration of demographic trends and projections. She ignores the implications of these for increasing diversity and enhancing the relevancy of universities’ curricula. Her oversights led this reviewer to wonder how she defines relevance and quality. What does she think higher education should be about, if not educating the diverse people it must serve?

Shameful Admissions offers one person’s candid and unashamed views about diversity in higher education. Browne-Miller does provide a good summary of issues facing universities and give the reader a good sense of the dynamics within higher education at this point in time.

—Carol Surles

Judith M. Gappa and David W. Leslie. *The Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-Timers in Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. 1993. Pp. 324.

In South America, part-time faculty, known as "taxi cab" professors, outnumber the full-time faculty at many universities. Taxi-cab professors teach their classes and then return to their other, more better-paid jobs elsewhere. Taxi-cab professors are an ever more present part of North American colleges and universities. Judith M. Gappa, Vice President for Judith M. Gappa and David W. Leslie Human Relations and Professor of Education at Purdue University, and David W. Leslie, Professor of Education at Florida State University, present here a study that examines part-time faculty in North America, providing data on the employment of part-time faculty based on a survey of administrators and part-time faculty at 17 diverse institutions of higher education in the United States and Canada. After analysis of the data, they suggest forty-three recommended practices that will do more justice to the status and career of part-time faculty, and also help institutions of higher education to grapple with the inevitable need to hire more part-time faculty and use them more effectively.

Chapters one through eight of the book examine "The Current Environment for Part-Time Faculty." This includes a profile of who the part-timers are and the conditions of their employment, as well as the internal and external forces affecting and affected by part-time faculty use. What emerges is a profile of faculty who are overused and abused by their institutions. They are paid little; they receive few, if any, employment related benefits; they have little or no employment security; and yet they undertake a disproportionate share of the undergraduate teaching load at many institutions of higher education. There are exceptions to this portrait of employment abuse, but they are few. In their preface, the authors pose a question that underpins Part Two of their study: "How can institutions expect people of talent to contribute to quality education programs when those same people are victims of medieval employment conditions?" (p. xi).

In "Part Two: Enhancing Education Through the Use of Part-Time Faculty," Gappa and Leslie first provide a chapter on "Recognizing the Changing Context of Academic Employment," pointing out that many key trends in higher education support the contention that "conditions that favor the use of nontenure-track positions seem to be intensifying" (p. 221). They believe that much of the rigidity in higher education's response to part-timers is directly attributable to the tenure system. Full-time faculty, they argue, are resistant to part-time faculty employment. The authors "question, for example, the viability of the existing tenure system because it requires that ten-

ured faculty be subsidized with a work force [of part-time faculty] that carries heavy loads at low pay" (p. 230).

Chapters 10 through 12 present the 43 "recommended practices" to remediate the problems that institutions of higher education face as they deal with part-time faculty. These are generally sound and prudent recommendations that focus on upgrading the quality of part-time faculty, integrating the part-timers into the mission and practice of the institution, and providing them with equitable working arrangements. Their concluding Chapter 13, "From Invisible to Valued: Creating a New Reality for Part-Time Faculty," argues that "a serious lack of readiness for change pervades academia's internal culture. This culture, driven by tenured faculty's beliefs and prerogatives, has stratified the faculty into two separate classes" (p. 278). The tenured and tenure-earning faculty are privileged and the part-time faculty are underprivileged. The latter will be more equitably integrated into the system of higher education, the authors argue, and this change will come either from within or outside of academia. Part-time faculty are too vital an element in the future of higher education for the present system to remain in place.

The authors confront a serious issue. However, blaming the full-time, tenured faculty for the woes of the part-time faculty is short-sighted. It fails to address the underlying problems affecting not only the use of part-timers but much of higher education. The primary source of the problem is that institutions of higher education are being placed in the position of having to do more with fewer resources. The public not only demands broadened access to higher education, but also demands that this is to be done without a commensurate increase in public spending for higher education. The result is legislative mandates for higher education to do more with the same or fewer public dollars. Thus, across states and over time there is a downward curve in public support per FTE student in public institutions of higher education. Public colleges and universities must find the monies needed to run their institutions by using actions that they have often previously avoided, including increased employment of part-time faculty.

The conditions fostering external demands for higher education to become more efficient are not likely to cease. But these demands do not often threaten tenured faculty. Their jobs, their professorships, and their pay are secure. Full-time faculty resist the rapid increase of part-time faculty because they believe that such an increase diminishes core educational values. Among these values is attention to students who need advising and attention, who need encouragement and support—before and after class. The latter of which is not often provided by part-time faculty. Full-time faculty resist the increasing use of part-time faculty as course providers, while fewer full-time faculty serve as program caretakers and administrators and institutional com-

mittee workers. Most full-time faculty do not believe that this enhances education for students, and faculty who are committed to teaching often resist the use of this educational strategy.

The authors point out the need for higher education to be more supportive of part-time faculty, both financially and otherwise, but the resources to provide such support are not forthcoming from the states. Instead, the message that is forthcoming from legislatures is that full-time faculty positions that come open should be filled with utmost care. Higher education needs less expensive (i.e., part-time) faculty to replace more expensive (i.e., full-time) faculty. The result will be more FTE students covered for each dollar spent. But when the authors attack full-time faculty as privileged employees who are “subsidized” by part-timers, they neglect to point out that the salaries of the full-time professorate are rather modest when compared with the salaries of comparably educated professionals in other fields, with the exception of the super-professors in endowed chairs at institutions such as Harvard and Yale. Thus, moderately paid full-time professors oppose the hiring of ever more, low-paid part-time faculty.

Most full-time faculty, tenured or not, would likely agree with Gappa and Leslie’s “concluding message: a college or university strengthens itself through the wise use of part-time faculty” (p. 277). To reiterate where I diverge from the authors’ position: the misuse and abuse of part-time faculty all too often follows from the public’s failure to provide support for quality, widely accessible public higher education. Sharply increasing the proportion of taxi-cab professors—even highly qualified and superb taxi-cab professors—while diminishing the proportion of full-time faculty, may not lead to an increase in the quality of higher education, or even to the maintenance of current levels of quality.

—Mark Stern

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