

Overview

By Harold S. Wechsler

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A former editor of NEA higher education publications, Wechsler writes on the history of minority access to college, efforts to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice on college campuses, ethnic studies, and education for business and for teaching. He is currently studying the encounter between first- and second-generation students and American colleges before 1960.

Wechsler's publications include "Eastern Standard Time: High School-College Collaboration and Admission to College," published by the College Board in A Faithful Mirror: Reflections on the College Board and Education in America, an anthology of essays commemorating the board's centennial, and Access to Success in the Urban High School: The Middle College Movement, a study of high schools for at-risk students, located on community college campuses, published by Teachers College Press.

Are American colleges and universities helpless in the face of uncontrollable external forces? Or can faculty and staff fend off the intrusions made by global and domestic institutions on their autonomy and independence?

This year's *Almanac* outlines the challenges we confront, including economic competition from less-regulated vendors—domestic and foreign—and cuts in federal and state domestic spending. Faculty and staff, the *NEA 2005 Almanac* authors agree, can shape their futures while continuing to fulfill their responsibilities to their students and communities. The *Almanac* suggests creative responses to these challenges, including building political coalitions and negotiating contract language that strengthens job security in a “just-in-time” academic marketplace.

Average salaries for faculty members increased by 1.9 percent in 2003–04, note Suzanne B. Clery and Amelia M. Topper in “Faculty Salaries: 2003–2004.” Salaries remain ahead of the prior peak achieved in the early 1970s, and faculty purchasing power

exceeded inflation. But the 3.0 percent average salary gain at independent colleges exceeded the increase at public colleges (1.4 percent).

One reason for the differential: the slow rebound in state appropriations for higher education after the recent recession. These appropriations *decreased* between 2002 and 2004, writes William Zumeta in “Higher Education’s Fiscal Fortunes.” The results: higher tuition and reduced access. What about FY 2005? Increases of less than five percent over FY 2004 in most states. Increased demands on resources, Zumeta adds, are prompting states to contemplate a major structural change—privatizing higher education.

How can faculty and staff members assure adequate appropriations? Self-serving claims won’t do, writes William D. Crist in “Saving Public Colleges and Universities.” Instead, Crist notes, we must underscore our service to current and future generations of students and act in concert with other like-minded groups. Adequate funding benefits all, Crist argues, since successful competition in the world

economy requires that students of all backgrounds have access to college. Crist's report on the rollback of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's appropriations cuts suggests a replicable action plan.

How will globalization affect higher education? Globalization may be inevitable, notes Philip G. Altbach in "Globalization and the University," but the challenge is to "create a global academic environment that recognizes the need to ensure that academic relationships are as equal as possible." Globalization, Altbach concludes, "must not turn into the neo-colonialism of the 21st century."

The Higher Education Act has helped several generations of students meet the rising costs of college. But the 109th Congress failed to reauthorize this act. "The Bush administration and Congress failed to do their jobs," writes Thomas R. Wolanin in "The Higher Education Act Reauthorization: Issues and Prospects." HEA is "too politically popular to oppose openly, but the Republican leadership saw no reason to invest the personal and political resources needed for a successful reauthorization." As for HEA's prospects in the 110th Congress, "the law is unlikely to be expansive in extending access to higher education or in supporting colleges and universities," Wolanin writes, even if Congress overcomes the significant obstacles to reauthorization.

One aspect of globalization—the rise of a contingent work force—challenges many hard-fought for improvements to salaries and working conditions. How do we assure the welfare of contingent faculty? Organizing part-time faculty is not easy, given their transience, but unions report more success each year. But even when organized, note Christine Maitland and Gary Rhoades, in "Bargaining for Contingent Faculty," these colleagues need contract language that

strengthens their professionalism. Maitland and Rhoades delineate the size and status of the contingent workforce and suggest many salutary contract provisions.

Which group is more satisfied with its working conditions—faculty members or staff? Linda K. Johnsrud and Jocelyn Surla Banaria explore job satisfaction in "Higher Education Support Personnel: Trends in Demographics and Worklife Perceptions." The number of staff members increased by 13.4 percent between 1993 and 2001, with support/service professionals showing the greatest increase. ESPs and faculty members, Johnsrud and Banaria report, "had similar perceptions of external groups, job support, and the importance of work-related benefits. . . Both groups reported a high level of job satisfaction."

This *Almanac* includes a CD-ROM with files containing faculty salary data by institution for 2003–04, a table presenting the contract clauses discussed in "Bargaining for Contingent Faculty," by Christine Maitland and Gary Rhoades, and articles from previous NEA *Almanacs* and issues of *Thought & Action*, *The NEA Journal of Higher Education*. The CD also contains the *College and University Data Analysis System (CUDAS)*, a new database developed by NEA that encapsulates key IPEDS data with an easy-to-use data search and retrieval engine.

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