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Techno-Euphoria as a Visa for Neoliberal/Neoconservative Capitalism's Invasion of Academia: the Case of Digital Measures

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Abstract

The overarching purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the link between the push for a euphoric and acritical use of technology and the neoliberal/neoconservative agenda, specifically in the field of higher education. This paper examines the implications of demanding that faculty use Digital Measures for recording their performance evaluations. The authors argue that this 'technological application' is a disguised path to centralize control and homogenize faculty performance by privileging only that which can be counted or measured. This centralization of control of faculty performance facilitates top university administrators to compare faculty outcomes ('productivity') across the different colleges without considering the unequal allocation of resources, including salaries and teaching loads. This inequality is in turn justified with reference to the 'market value' of the various disciplines, rather than their social responsiveness for the common good and human fulfillment. This constitutes a clear example of the already advanced invasion of the 'free market' doctrine -- central to neoliberalism/neo-conservatism - -into academia. The overemphasis on the "market value" of knowledge, the obsession with measurement and data management, and most recently the techno-euphoria have negative impact on the morale of faculty and the learning environment for students. Under the neoliberal/neoconservative doctrine, the homogenization of procedures and assessments is promoted as increasing quality, rigor and equality to cover up the enormous inequity in faculty treatment, and the detriment of the values of

academic freedom and shared governance, the foundational values of higher education as the guardian and agent of democratic and liberating thinking.

Introduction

There is a widespread belief that digital educational technology is going to solve a range of problems in higher public education such as soaring costs for students, defunding by state governments, needed improvements in teaching and distribution of materials, as well as reaching students who live and work far from campuses. In this paper, digital educational technology refers to the use of digital software, hardware and architecture for educational purposes such as teaching, learning, evaluation, communication, and data management. This conviction by top administrators of higher education institutions often goes unquestioned and seldom is there a debate about the presumed benefits and the negative impacts. The authors consider that there are many assumptions and agendas underlying such techno-euphoria that need to be exposed and discussed, starting with questions such as: Whose interests does this techno-euphoria serve? What kind of technology are we talking about? Who ultimately is going to be hurt by the use of such software? The authors are not against digital educational technology if it is used for democratizing higher education. As educators, we have been using some digital tools for improving teaching, for example through instant access to the internet to illustrate cases and find information, for reaching students far away from campus, and for facilitating communication and organization. We fully agree with Principle #4 of the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education (2011) which states that "Quality higher education in the 21st century should incorporate technology in ways that expand opportunity and maintain quality". But we are against using technology for profiting at the expense of students' right to a high quality education; for instance, when courses are offered with minimal or no group social interaction or synchronic social construction of knowledge beyond time consuming and delayed email writing back and forth. In the

case of faculty, the authors oppose the use of digital technology that assaults academic freedom and autonomy for the benefit of the higher administrators' management of evaluation data. Here, the case in point is the use of Digital Measures for faculty performance evaluation.

Digital Measures constitutes a striking instance of techno-euphoria by higher education administration. Clearly this data management system makes the work of top administrators easier by placing a further burden on the backs of faculty who are already overloaded with increasing non-academic work, at significantly lower pay levels compared with the compensation for top administrators. The latest data provided by the Chronicle of Higher Education show that US university presidents are making between 3.7 and 10 times the average salaries of their professors on campus (http://chronicle.com/article/How-Pay-Compares/129981; Stripling & Fuller, 2012). "Welcome to data management nirvana" -- indicates the Digital Measures website (www.digitalmeasures.com/home). As faculty we should ask: "nirvana" for whom? Where is the research that supports this model of data management? There is none. The assumption is that if we introduce digital technology to compile data, it is necessarily a good change for everybody.

Digital Measures "flagship solutions" were created in 1999 at the University of Wisconsin Center for Educational Research as a system for evaluating online courses. Now, the announcement says that they have been adopted by 2000+ schools and colleges in 25+ countries. What this expansion shows is that this is a good business, not that it is good for higher education faculty. Actually, Digital Measures constitutes another step in the corporatization of the university since it promotes the standardization of performance and the outsourcing to contract services of tasks that can be carried out

more appropriately by faculty themselves. Unfortunately, higher education top administrators use the exaggerated generalizations of Digital Measures advertising to justify their decision to buy and adopt this data management system unilaterally. Concerning performance assessment, the announcement states: *"...our clients went back to their faculty six to twelve times a year asking for information for annual activity reports, promotion and tenure, accreditation, reports to external constituents, and more. Activity insight enables you to ask for the information just once – and then showcase it to the world"*.

The common practice in today's universities is one annual faculty performance evaluation, not "six to twelve times a year" as the advertisement claims. So what advantage does Digital Measures represent for faculty? Whose work becomes simplified? We can see advantages for administrators, but not really for faculty. On the contrary, this demand adds significantly more stressful work for faculty. Worse than that, our personal information is at risk if administrators heed the company's exhortation to "showcase it to the world". This is potentially dangerous! The authors have had the experience of using Digital Measures for performance evaluation and have been able to see the danger not only for faculty, but for the whole institution. This constitutes our main rationale for writing this article.

The widespread euphoria with digital educational technology, such as Digital Measures, becomes a sort of visa for industry to take over even more functions and processes inside the universities, in addition to those already taken. But this visa is special, since those holding it do not need to declare their real intentions for providing a "service" to the university. In an interview, Bill Gates (billionaire owner and former CEO of Microsoft) about "The Future of Higher Education" (Young, 2012), said he considers

that a major problem in higher education is the low graduation rate. Therefore, he has given millions to 'reformers' who have 'innovative' solutions for 'fixing' that problem. In this regard, he proposes, as an innovation, to make videos of lectures by star professors and make them available massively through the Internet. In this manner, the costs of higher education will drop and students will not drop out of college. Of course, he has in mind no more than a caricature of what is a 'regular' college education, as well as the solution for solving that problem. What is not a caricature is his vision of a 'venture philanthropist'. Indeed, he imagines his company producing thousand of videos for courses to be offered on the Internet and selling them around the globe. However, he denies any intervention when he says: *"I don't think there's any business people who are just walking out of their office door and walking over to a university and saying, Hey, reorganize your university this way. I've never heard of that." (Young, 2012, Interview transcripts).* Kumashiro (2012) appears to be responding to Gates: *"Whereas traditional philanthropists view their giving as donations that support what others were doing, venture philanthropists view their giving as entryways into that work. That is, philanthropists themselves are now getting significantly involved in goal setting, decision making, and evaluating progress and outcomes to ensure that their priorities are met." (p. 15, italics added).* Kumashiro (2012) demonstrates how billionaires are using their money to sponsor campaigns to discredit higher education as a public service, and then to propose solutions that favor their interests. One part of such a campaign is to influence state legislators to defund higher education, obviously to create a crisis that will open possibilities for cutting programs, services, and benefits, while stagnating compensation for faculty and lower level staff. We can't help but recognize the path of a strategy Naomi Klein (2007) calls ""the rise of disaster

capitalism". By this she refers to a manufactured crisis in a given system (like education), or even the economic system of an entire country, by applying measures to create extreme instability and suffering in those affected. These measures have been developed and used by the economic 'hit men' of the neoliberal corporate machinery, similar to the 'shock therapy', which Klein identifies as the "Shock Doctrine". Once a deep crisis is created by one shock after another, the corporate redeemers enter the scenario with solutions to revamp the whole system or institution with "structural changes" to get rid of any obstacles to their business agenda. Thus public institutions such as state universities become, in effect, for-profit institutions; with no regard to the public mission they play in society.

The media also play an important role in this corporate takeover of the university. The propaganda machine against public higher education is often veiled, yet so pervasive that it passes unnoticed by most people. A recent article in Time magazine "College is Dead: Long Live College!" (Ripley, 2012), the writer discusses the possibilities of bringing down the cost of a college education by making courses available online from companies such as Udacity, EdX, MOOCS, with lecturers from high ranking universities such as Stanford and Harvard. The underlying message is that good courses online will save the college. There is hardly any question about why the cost of a college education is so high and continues rising, and where the money from increases in tuition goes. Ginsberg (2011) documents how increases in tuition generally do not go to pay faculty salary increases, but to sponsor the explosion of administrative cost. These trends are not isolated phenomena, but part of a broader hegemonic ideology called neoliberal/neo-conservative academic capitalism.

Neoliberal/Neoconservative Academic Capitalism

The above examples of "venture capitalism" disguised as "venture philanthropy" may not be obvious to everyone, if these ventures are not recognized as part of the larger neoliberal/neoconservative agenda. This agenda started formally in the US with what has become known as the Powell Manifesto (Powell, 1971), written by Lewis Powell on request from the president of the Chamber of Commerce at that time. In this memorandum, he describes as attacks on the American free enterprise system the activism of students and professors that was growing on college campuses, especially in the disciplines of liberal arts and social sciences, as well as from intellectual writers, media commentators and politicians. Powell also sketched out how to counter this hostility: by using the economic muscle of the Chamber of Commerce to create a cadre of scholars and speakers able to actually co-opt cherished values such as "academic freedom" and give them new meanings such as "openness", "fairness" and "balance". He advises the Chamber and entrepreneurs to control the media through advertising, and control the politicians through lobbying and sponsoring their campaigns to advance the "free enterprise" agenda. According to Powell, the most critical target of action should be the courts. He explains: "Under our constitutional system, especially with an activist-minded Supreme Court, the judiciary may be the most important instrument for social, economic and political change". Obviously, after more than four decades the conservative agenda outlined in this memo has gone far beyond its initial goals.

Newfield (2008) refers to the conservative backlash on universities as the *Unmaking of the Public University* and frames it with a historical perspective. He points out that the social movements of the postwar era starting making demands of egalitarianism, equity, participatory democracy and free speech without discrimination on the basis of gender,

race, or ability. At the same time, the GI Bill opened the doors to higher education for many who would have not been able to participate otherwise. Graduates from universities also started pushing boundaries and promoting changes outside them in public and private institutions, as well as in small and large companies. Subsequently, conservative leaders associated with business and corporations started to roll back those social democratic changes, which they considered an attack on the "Free Enterprise System".

The modernization of the conservative agenda resulted in what Apple (2006, 2004) identified as the "New Alliance" between neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism. There are two other distinctive groups which also shared a belief in the "free market" as a basic principle for organizing institutions and activities of society: authoritarian populism or religious right, and the professional managerial class. The latter group can be characterized by their fervent promotion of standards, standardization, control and data management. Actually, despite some ideological differences, these groups converge on the values of the "free market" (Demarrais, 2006).

The corporate takeover of institutions of higher education has resulted in a change of values such as justice, freedom, equality, human rights and equal educational opportunity, replacing them by accountability, standardization, privatization, value-added products, competiveness, and, ultimately, profitability. The neoliberal/ neoconservative doctrine's basic premise is that every dimension of human and social life can be regulated by the laws and values of the 'free' market. As Giroux (2002) remarks, corporations cannot see beyond their interests; therefore they do not attempt to evaluate the social and moral implications of their actions and influences. Certainly, the neoliberal/neoconservative ideological invasion into higher education has promoted the

adoption of a hierarchical and antidemocratic model of administration, as Davis and Chandler (1998) document, whose modus operandi consists of building and maintaining a structure of control.

System of Control of the Professorate

The switch to a corporate university includes also a change of language: the language of performance evaluation is replaced by the language of productivity measurement. Digital Measures is a standardized measure of faculty 'productivity', which leads inevitably to the standardization of performance, facilitating for top administrators the comparison of 'productivity' among faculty members. The direct or indirect consequence of this system of performance evaluation is the control of the performance of the professoriate under the guise of accountability.

For Giroux (2002), a system of accountability divorced from social responsibility has no other function than control *per se*. Digital Measures facilitates such control, by making performance evaluation standardized, centralized and exclusively in the hands of top administrators to manipulate the data. This results in what Davis & Chandler (1998) characterize as the hierarchical model of administration -- one in which managers have complete power to allocate resources and control production. The distribution of resources becomes based on 'meritocracy', resulting in social Darwinism by which competition is promoted while collaboration and solidarity are discouraged at best or punished at worst. Under these conditions, administrators' decisions favor very few and afflict the rest. Obviously, this move represents a regression to *Scientific Management,* also identified as Taylorism (Taylor, 1911) from the beginning of the twentieth century,

which initiated the practice of workers' compensation based on measurable performance metrics.

The focus of performance evaluation on 'measurable' outcomes regardless of the differential allocation of resources or inputs is not only terribly unjust, but terribly counter-productive, hence setting up the whole system to fail. In the US, there has been created an infamous precedent in the schooling system by placing an exclusive focus on outcomes, which has resulted in a real, as opposed to manufactured, crisis. Nonetheless, most policy makers and administrators now only care about test scores, but at the same time withdraw resources from those schools not meeting the expected level of performance. Persistence in this absurdity actually helps us prove that the actual purpose of these reforms is not to improve schools, but to show that they are failing and therefore that there is a necessity to "turn them around" by giving their administration to a school management corporation or simply privatizing them.

Nowadays, the reformist movement is reaching every corner of public higher education. It follows the neoliberal/neoconservative doctrine of the market as the regulator of educational processes and affairs. Like achievement tests in schools, the accountability drive in higher education focuses merely on outcomes—faculty productivity-- with no regard to the equal or even higher relevance of processes, as well as the differential allocation of resources depending on the field of faculty expertise. In addition, the market commodification of knowledge exacerbates this differential allocation of resources and social status. Thus, faculty in liberal arts and some professions such as social work and education, whose market value is minimal, are paid relatively lower salaries than, for instance, engineering. As faculty belonging to these 'low market value' professions, we need to ask: How can faculty 'productivity' from different fields

of study (different colleges and departments) be assessed fairly with an instrument such as Digital Measures, without entering into the equation the resources allocated (including time)? The authors can attest that fair assessment in these circumstances is hardly possible.

The exclusive focus on 'outcomes' in institutions of higher education nationwide, without even considering the fact of their systematic defunding by states, shows the actual purpose of that accountability system: to prompt higher education institutions to turn to outside, mostly corporate, funding at the expense of betraying their own principles of academic freedom, public service, deliberative democracy and shared governance (Hanley, 2005; Slaughter & Rhodes). An analogous case in higher education is 'outcome-based learning'. Bennet and Brady (2012) criticize this type of learning evaluation since it is based on categories that are too general and irrelevant to the real process of learning in the classroom. Actually, they consider that 'outcome-based learning' is a strategy to deviate attention from the real problems of higher education such as defunding, elitism, attacks on teachers and disservice to students. In addition, state policy makers and administrations often cite the economic crisis to justify defunding of public higher education, while at the same they reallocate resources from tuition increases and program cuts to increase administration and/or athletics budgets. At the same time, university presidents are emulating corporate CEOs in salaries and styles of leadership (Stripling & Fuller, 2012; http://chronicle.com/article/How-Pay-Compares/129981/; US Senate Report, 2012).

The accountability system of whole programs and institutions, based on measurable outcomes such as graduation rates, led administrators of the California State University (CSU) system to attempt to eliminate General Education courses so that students

graduate sooner without including humanities in their college education. Yamada (2012, Sep. 22) reports that top administrators, without consulting with faculty, included that proposal in the meeting agenda of CSU Regents. Fortunately, faculty and students mobilized to remove the item from the agenda. Here we see the reckless and unprofessional behavior of CSU system administrators succumbing to the pressure to present quantitative results, perhaps to justify their own high salaries. If the top administrators were academics themselves, they would know that decisions on curricula are up to faculty, not up to regents or administrators. It is not clear in Yamada's article if these administrators are the new class of entrepreneurs taking over the 'management' of higher education institutions. Of course, the majority of the Regents are not academics in any case.

Ginsberg (2011), speaking about his book, *The Fall of the Faculty,* refers to the corporate model of administration of higher education institutions as "administrative imperialism and academic destruction". In the case of the California State University system, the administrators moved to abolish the humanistic component of general education that all college students receive as foundational courses. Actually, we should not be surprised by thus, given that humanities and liberal arts are considered as having low market value, and that they were a major target for control or elimination in the "Powell Manifesto" (Powell, 1971).

Davis and Chandler (1998) describe a model of administration of higher education institutions based on "real participatory democracy", which they argue should be the ambiance for scholarship to flourish. External control of scholarship, they maintain, is a type of surveillance that kills creativity and responsibility. Faculty will do what counts most in their performance evaluation, not necessarily what they are most interested and

passionate about, because perhaps that won't be counted or appreciated for its intrinsic value. Davis and Chandler consider that creative and rich scholarship comes when faculty have real choices through participation, real academic freedom, and real socio-economic security. If these conditions are fostered by a democratic model of administration, faculty will be guided by intrinsic motivation, values and principles (not norms and regulations), and feel obliged to act morally and to establish close relationships with the communities the university is there to serve.

Top-down Control and De-professionalization of the Professoriate

More visible every day are the multiple pressures from vested interests and politicians to exercise control over higher education, to eliminate collective bargaining and tenure, to curtail disciplines such as liberal arts of relatively low 'market value', and to reduce other services to faculty and students (Giroux, 2011, Yamada, 2011). Digital Measures has the potential to provide the hard data (e.g. credit hours) for making top-down decisions about teaching loads and to open or close academic programs based on 'demand'. Also more visible are the strategies of control and humiliation of faculty through showing unreliable, invalid and unfair assessments on 'outcomes' while systemic defunding is in place (Hanley, 2005; Slaughter & Rhodes). In addition to defunding, the attacks on higher education, especially public education, occur on many fronts. Vedder (2011, 2012) defends the corporate university as more efficient and a provider of 'many goods'. For him the "simple" solution to make higher education affordable is to ask faculty to teach more. Like Vedder states that some state legislators do not understand the work of academics and yet have no reluctance to legislate content and even pedagogy. This was certainly the case when the New Mexico legislature

demanded certain specific content and approaches to teaching literacy in the program of elementary teacher licensure. When elected officials attempt to specify for college faculty *what* to teach in reading courses for prospective teachers, they are trampling on faculty academic freedom and the institutional control of curriculum. To enforce their demands, the New Mexico Legislature passed unanimously the bill HB 74 of 2011, which requires that all teacher candidates take a standardized state examination on the "science of teaching reading" for elementary education licensure. This is a clear imposition of top-down control and de-professionalization of College of Education faculty.

How does Digital Measures de-professionalize the professoriate? We assert that academic work is more complex and diverse than assumed in Digital Measures; thus, faculty work that does not fit nicely into this mold could be facing serious challenges in recording their achievements, as well as dealing with issues of inequity in terms of the relative value given to their work. For instance, when a faculty member engages in participatory action research, the time required to enter into a community and become a trusted member might amount to one or two semesters. Only when this happens can one start working with the community to define what will be the problem or focus of research. The whole process can take several years, and even at the 'end' of the project, one cannot just take the results and leave. Participatory research implies that participants are co-researchers and therefore co-owners of the results of the study. The outside (often academic) researcher can leave only when he/she becomes redundant. In the system that focuses on outcomes, the faculty that conducts this type of research might be in difficult position to provide 'measurable' results in a timely manner. In the process of sorting out what counts and fits these standardized measures, such a type of

research work cannot be captured under the 'Digital Measures' recording system, no matter how malleable it promises to be. The faculty, then, are pushed towards trivializing their work. By including only those activities easiest to record as accomplishments, we cannot validly represent the whole and the heart of our work, but just the quantifiable dimensions.

Indeed, when qualitative concepts are quantified or indexed for comparison, we take the risk of losing the unique properties of the quality of work and its human and social dimensions. The squeezing is not only unfair, but also dangerous, since it promotes fast and somewhat repetitive production (e.g. publications) to show greater numbers. We know that quality academic work takes time, and now more than ever a great deal of effort because of the pressures, defunding and bashing of public higher education.   Its trivialization leads to an unconscionable de-professionalization of higher education academic work.

In brief, we consider that a simplistic set of metrics cannot do justice to the complexity and diversity of academic work and the quality of higher education needed by the highly diverse society of the 21st Century. After all, the assessment system needs to capture the complexity and diversity of academic work, and not the other way around. Labaree (2011) demonstrates how the lure of metrics and statistics becomes so insidious that it leads us to miss the target, and how the consequences for education can be "deep and devastating" (p.621). Actually, these devastating consequences have already happened in public schools, and have started to happen in institutions of higher education. For Labaree, statistics and the cult of measurement lure researchers, administrators, educators and the public "away from the issues that matter" (p. 628). It's like "forcing a rectangular grid onto a round world" (p.628). The lure of statistics and

cult of measurement "radically reduce the complexity of the educational domain that is visible to policy makers and then leads them to construct policies that fit the normalized digital map of education, rather than the idiosyncratic analog terrain of education" (pp. 628-629). Definitely, Digital Measures are inappropriate and unfair to evaluate the "idiosyncratic analog terrain" of academic work. Labaree could not have said it better.

Through pre-established categories (e.g. number of total credit hours taught), according to a measurable model of academic work, Digital Measures forces homogeneity in performance. It has been built on the assumption that equality in the instrument of measurement will result in fair evaluation. This is a concrete example in which equality of outcomes actually is very inequitable. When a model for reporting outcomes is imposed for performance evaluation, some activities and results necessarily are privileged over others. Which ones? Precisely those activities considered valid as academic work according to the model upon which Digital Measures was constructed. But this is not the worst part of the situation. There is another major assumption concerning equality in allocation of resources, work conditions, and expectations of allocation of effort which creates a blatantly unfair system of performance evaluation.

The question we need to ask is: How can faculty produce comparable outcomes when we know that in US public higher education the resources are not equally allocated to the colleges or academic units? For example, in every university, faculties of the same academic rank are not paid equally across colleges and schools. In each college or school, faculties are paid at rates comparable to the respective college of their peer institutions. Peer institutions are those similar in size, types of programs, degrees and research resources, which in the case of our own institution have been strategically selected so that below-cost-of-living salaries may be justified. The argument for this

discriminatory payment (euphemistically called 'equity' pay) among faculty with the same academic rank in the same university is the 'market value' of the knowledge in their specific field of study and discipline. The market value of liberal arts and those professions whose main focus is the cultivation of the mind, the human potential, and the common good, such as education and social work, is relatively low, and therefore the faculty working in these fields are paid the lowest salaries despite their often larger teaching loads than the faculty of those fields of study and expertise with higher market value. Is it fair to compare faculty across disciplines and colleges when the resources are not allocated equally? No, it is not. This implies that the de-professionalization of faculty in these areas of low market value is even worse.

Furthermore, one important casualty resulting from the trend to homogenize performance and mine the data to make top-down decisions by high rank administrators is diversity. The core meaning of a university is precisely its diversity of world views, perspectives, specialties, philosophies, research methodologies, outreach strategies, and theories and approaches to teaching and assessing. In other words, 'university' implies academic freedom, and academic freedom promotes the enactment and strengthening of a democratic society.

The dangerous aspect of this illusion of standardization of performance evaluation as 'equal treatment', and hence 'objective' and 'scientifically valid', is that homogenized assessment becomes the underlying force that drives all our thinking, actions and relationships as faculty. This prediction is based on what is now happening in the US public schools, under the regimen of 'high-stakes testing'. Without exaggeration, this type of testing has become the *raison d'etre* of teaching and learning at schools today. Kohn (2000) captures this issue in one of his books*: Raising the Scores, Ruining the*

Schools. We can't help but be very concerned with Digital Measures as a stepping stone toward establishing the modality of standardized assessment of students in universities, to the benefit first of all of the billion-dollar testing industry and its allied politicians and administrators. As Labaree (2011) remarks, administrators and politicians have an obsession with statistics in graphs and tables, to show that they are in control to make things work, and/or to justify the measures they consider important for their role, regardless of the "deep and devastating" consequences for the public mission of the institution itself.

All in all, as Ball (2001) puts it, 'marketopia' is a dystopian. Our current economic crisis attests to this dystopian as it is used to attack all public services and public employees in all kind of ways. Under the banner of accountability and efficiency, the enemies of public education are taking over the institutions of higher education and forcing the business model on them with respect to services to students and faculty, the assessment system, and even curriculum and pedagogy, as in the case of the intervention in the New Mexico literacy program indicated above. In addition to the assault on academic freedom of faculty, with all the testing and standards fever, the accountability drive is completely divorced from social and civic responsibility and the consideration that education is a fundamental right of the people (Spring, 2000). We agree with Giroux's (2002) argument that the kind of education reform in which accountability is only one-way and has no moral vision other than its underlying market value, which makes it profitable for very few and inaccessible for many prospective students, is a wrong turn for higher education

Yamada (2012, September 22) exposes a clear pattern in the way the neoliberal and neoconservative agenda "killed" the university as we knew it by imposing a continual

defunding of public higher institutions, and by the dismantling of tenure by not replacing most of the tenured faculty who leave or retire and hiring low-paid temporary and part-time faculty, non-tenure track, with no benefits or job security. Actually, part-time faculties need to work in several institutions to make a living. This is for Yamada "a brutal de-professionalization" of the professorate. For her, we have been taken over by an "alien for-profit culture", which has deeply degraded our profession and killed our institutions of higher learning. Of course, students are ultimately affected, especially because they have less opportunity to interact with professors beyond the classroom and to get assistance with their academic development. As a result, students are paying much more for less. Not only do the non-tenure track faculties outnumber the tenured and tenure track faculty in the majority (75% nationwide) of institutions of higher education, but also by the year 2012, according to Ginsberg's (2011) documentation, higher education administrators will outnumber faculty. Ginsberg argues that the excuses that many top administrators provide for raising tuition and not replacing vacant full-time faculty slots with the same type of hires are not true. He documents that tuition increases often go for raising top administrators' own salaries and getting more lower-level administrators, consultants, and staff to work for them.

In sum, the neoliberal/neoconservative attack has two main styles of invasion of the academia which are amply illustrated by the case of Digital Measures for faculty performance evaluation: First, to control the professoriate by using the myopic view of faculty 'productivity' to intrigue against faculty and ultimately against public education. Second, to de-professionalize the professoriate and weaken their resistance and power to speak up and write about the corporate university and other social issues and injustices.

Re-affirming the public mission of higher education institutions

The previous sections expose important problems at the inside of higher education, created mostly as a consequence, on one hand, of the conservative backlash starting officially with the Powell Manifesto (Powell, 1971), and on the other, by the corporate doctrine that universities will be more efficient if they adopt the business model and actually make money out of education. As Giroux (2010) notes, corporate values, culture, and model of administration (management on their terms) collide with the purpose and meaning of the university and its civic and democratic culture. He argues that the university culture has traditionally represented values such as participatory democracy, academic freedom, human rights, equality, equity, justice, sustainability, social and civic responsibility, and diversity as inherent to democracy.

We consider that as faculty of a public higher institution, it is our duty to reaffirm the public mission of the university. We agree with Giroux' (2002) statement that the public mission of the university is ultimately to be the "guardians of democracy"; that is, guardians of academic freedom and shared governance. A central facet of the university concept is the tenure tradition, which ultimately protects the former values.

In this vein, a great part of the role of faculty is to cultivate the mind and spirit of students as complex, diverse, and multifaceted human beings. This task takes a tremendous amount of thinking, time and energy, and cannot be captured in all its subtlety, extension and complexity when we attempt to 'measure' it through credit hours load, for example. As the neoliberal/ neoconservative ideology of the corporate university invades and erodes the university's traditional democratic culture, the main function of the faculty becomes the preparation of students for the job market. Giroux (2002) contests the narrow view of education as 'job training' by arguing that

preparation for a job is only part of the holistic preparation and cultivation of students'

potential. Furthermore, in order to be able to embrace a well rounded higher education

for students we need to rethink what is good academic leadership. Davis and Chandler

(1998) propose the administrative model of participatory democracy as opposed to the

hierarchical model promoted by the corporate (patriarchal) neoliberal doctrine. They

define leadership in a participatory democracy as providing information and strategies

to others so that they learn to make good decisions. What we have now is completely

the opposite: the faculty produces information for administrators to make decisions,

unfortunately, as Ginsberg (2011) notes, with no accountability to faculty, students or

any stakeholder impacted by those decisions.

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