

## The Global Common Good and the Future of Academic Professionals

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*“The status and working conditions of the academic profession worldwide are under strain due to both mass access and budget constraints. While the profession faces different challenges in different regions, the professoriate is confronting significant difficulties everywhere. . . . It is possible that up to half of the world’s university teachers have only earned a bachelor’s degree. In much of the world half the academic staff is close to retirement. There are too few new PhDs produced to replace those leaving the profession . . . . In many Latin American countries, up to 80 per cent of the teachers in higher education are employed part-time. . . . Moreover, in recent years, a global academic marketplace has developed: academics are internationally mobile” (UNESCO, 2015, p. 56).*

Can the higher education faculty sustain itself as a profession? And why does this question matter as much as more frequently asked questions regarding access, costs, quality, governance, and competitiveness? Are those who educate—teachers, scholars, and supporters—so different from nation to nation, culture to culture, economy to economy as to preclude any commonality that might underlie a shared profession worldwide? This special issue of *Higher Learning Research Communications* seeks to address these questions by posing as a unifying concept the academic profession’s duty to the common good. It is a duty that of necessity and of increasing urgency transcends borders and boundaries of every kind. UNESCO (2015) warns that the world’s population of teachers, including postsecondary teachers, faces daunting challenges and limitations, which may hamper the world’s ability to ensure opportunity and sustainability for humanity. Education is a central avenue by which nations and people seek to improve the status of the collective, just as they use it for more self-interested purposes. Elementary and secondary schooling are the baseline for individual and societal wellbeing—as reflected in the United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals, which called for achieving universal primary education by 2015. Higher education is essential for creating the advanced knowledge and human capital necessary to address the world’s most challenging issues, ranging from the environment to health to security to societal stability with such immediate crises as drought and climate change, terrorism, migration, famine, and health epidemics.

While enormous progress was made in achieving the UN’s 2015 goal, especially in expanding access to education for girls and women at primary and secondary levels, the necessity of greatly enhanced education is now universally recognized as essential to global progress, equity, and justice. The 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals step up the expectations for education, calling for “inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race or ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society” (United Nations General Assembly, p. 7).

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In an era of unprecedented social disruption and migration, the challenges facing higher education are daunting with unforeseeable long-term consequences.

Postsecondary education provides the advanced knowledge that, most often, allows for innovation and improvements to the quality of life for groups (cultural, political, religious, economic, or geographic) as well as the whole—whether a nation, a region, or the world. The structures needed to provide education and training are bound by a common need for personnel to deliver the content, engage the students, conduct the research, and administer the organizations. Postsecondary institutions rely upon academic professionals to conduct each aspect of their knowledge-based missions—which include, to various degree, discovery, creation, and dissemination of knowledge. Furthermore, the UN Development Programme states, when nations (and their institutions) fail to educate their people they hamper progress, both civic and economic: “adults with lower literacy skills are far more likely to . . . have less trust in their fellow citizens, and perceive themselves as objects – rather than actors – in the political process. For countries that fail to equip their residents with the proper skills, technological progress is unlikely to translate into economic growth, and large swaths of the population risk languishing on the margins of society” (Schleicher, 2015). Higher education and the faculties that teach at the expanding array of educational providers (supplementing government-sponsored institutions with nonprofit, for-profit, online, and sub-degree entities providing credentials of varying kinds) now face unprecedented challenges in quality attainment, which ultimately depends on the integrity and professionalism of teachers and scholars.

This special issue of *Higher Learning Research Communications* responds to UNESCO’s (2015) call for educational institutions and educators to rethink education in the contemporary era and focuses on how academic endeavors can, do, and should act in service to a global common good. Some contributors also rightly take note of how we fall short of the UNESCO assertion that “education must be about learning to live on a planet under pressure” (p. 3). From the societal responsibility and opportunity shaped by the missions of different types of institutions to the role cultural traditions take in shaping these missions, several of the issue’s contributors pose a value-based approach to assessing postsecondary efforts, for example, raising concerns about the commodification of knowledge and the placement of institutional gain above the common good.

Authors of other articles address growing social concerns using a policy lens and student-centric discussion—such as examining how governments can contribute to the global as well as personal good in setting expectations for students’ civic know-how or asking how a disciplinary lens—using cultural literacy studies—enables students to place themselves in the global context. In the words of the UNESCO (2015) report, it means that higher education “must be about cultural literacy, on the basis of respect and equal dignity, helping to weave together the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development” (p. 3). And a few contributors write from their own experiences as university leaders and teachers, asking fellow academics to reflect on motivations—and outcomes—of acting with the common good in mind.

A highly-trained and well-informed workforce is the keystone of each article in this issue—and of the lofty expectations that UNESCO has set forth. If we are to build on the successes described in this issue and avoid the pitfalls—of catering too much to the private goods model of higher education or shying away from the largest and most widespread societal ills—a broad understanding of the faculty is required as is a rethinking of how current trends in higher education can be used to further our public good purpose.

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### The global condition of faculty

The UNESCO (2015) report provides a sense of the faculty's global condition and the impact of transnational trends. It is not encouraging, especially as the demand and rewards for faculty in fields closely aligned with national economic priorities mask the deteriorating conditions of faculty worldwide: over-reliance on part-time and under-prepared faculty, calls for increased productivity and greater efficiency (often translating into increased workloads, overcrowded classrooms, and misuse of technology), and growing political or religious constraints on academic freedom. Developed nations (and more broadly, Global North nations) are decidedly advantaged in the deployment of qualified and supported faculty, but even these nations are experiencing an erosion in long taken-for-granted professional conditions. A snapshot of several national contexts demonstrates both the diversity of the nations and the similarity of their academic workforce-related issues.

- Based on a 2012 study of the professoriate in 28 nations, Philip Altbach observed that “conditions for the global professoriate today are generally poor – at a time when the university has never been more important for societies and when professors, especially those in research universities, are key to their countries’ participation in the global knowledge economy” (MacGregor, 2013).
- South Africa, that continent’s most advanced educational economy, depends on 18,000 full-time academics, of which only 40% have PhDs. According to Johann Mouton, director of the University of Stellenbosch’s Centre for Research on Science and Technology, “We need to replace them, but we’re not even doing that. We are never going to be able to reproduce the academic system at this rate. This is a real problem” (Dell, 2010).
- In the U.S. students are now taught by a faculty that is over two-thirds “contingent”—that doesn’t have tenure or the promise of it: “The American professoriate has experienced an ‘unraveling’ over the past several decades, reflected in the shift from a more traditional model of a professional, mostly tenure-track faculty toward a mostly contingent academic workforce. The erosion of a strong and well-established academic profession, in the absence of new visions to replace the status quo, has implications for a broader deterioration of the higher education enterprise as a whole” (Kezar & Maxey, 2015, p. 1).
- In India, the extent of the shortage of qualified faculty is unknown, but it is estimated to be at least 25% greater than the current academic workforce: “With the demand for higher education already high in absolute terms and growing rapidly, it is proving difficult to find sufficient numbers of qualified faculty” (Asian Scientist, 2016).
- In China, the rapid expansion of access to higher education and the consequential impact of recruiting more faculty has led, on one hand, to aggressive efforts to persuade Chinese scholars in other nations to return “home,” often with offers of new facilities and research support, while on the other hand the scramble to grow quickly has raised questions of academic integrity since only about 9% of Chinese academics are thought to hold the doctorate (Altbach, 2009, p. 22): “Academic misconduct is particularly serious in China. Since the 1990s, academic culture has fast become decadent and this ‘tainted’ culture has penetrated deeply into the higher education sector from regional to national flagship institutions, and permeated every aspect of university operations” (Yang, 2016).

When faculty do not have the professional resources they require (from offices to computer equipment), appropriate levels of academic training (advanced degrees or specialized skills in teaching with technology), or the personal security (equitable compensation and stability of employment), it becomes more difficult for them to complete their job responsibilities, much less to do so at a level of quality that will meet the world’s needs for citizenship and innovation. The

problem is amplified at a time when college enrollments worldwide are expanding rapidly—and perhaps will even double over the next few decades. In addition to these seemingly “basic” resources for work, the conditions for education are changing rapidly enough as to require nearly continual updating—in technology, pedagogy, legal requirements, student learning preferences, and the like—by the faculty. Thus, continuing educational development is needed even after necessary credentials are acquired and resources are provided.

The need for institutionally supported faculty training and support is a difficulty for institutions and educators. Leaders and administrators face a conundrum. As much as they would like to provide additional compensation, benefits, and support for their academic workers, when it comes to delivering their educational offerings many institutions face structural deficits whereby the cost of education is not adequately met through government support or even dramatic increases in student tuition. In the United States, universities turn to philanthropy from private entities and individuals, grants from government and private organizations, commodification of intellectual property, and contracts for a range of profit-generating services, to fill in the gap. Often individual faculty are called upon to personally compensate for the lack of institutional support by volunteering their time and effort (thus foregoing other opportunities or income) to gain the knowledge required to keep up with advances in technology, pedagogy, employers’ needs, and citizenship skills. They also use their own financial resources to pay for travel to conferences and other professional activities, when institutional support is lacking.

In many nations, institutions lack the autonomy to engage in entrepreneurial activities or even to set their own fee structures. A growing phenomenon is illustrated by the funding of Kenyan universities. The government provides full funding for eligible students, but demand has increased “against a backdrop of decreasing ratio of financial allocation to universities from the Government. Since 2000/1 academic year, only about . . . 25% of candidates who meet minimum university entry requirements, gets admitted on Government sponsorship to public universities” (Gudo, 2014, p. 1). The surpluses of qualified students in Kenya and multiple nations have created markets for privatization of both public and private universities. Moreover, public universities are admitting students beyond the government quota at market-rate tuition to help subsidize operations—a perhaps necessary and even creative strategy. It ultimately creates a downward slope to lowered quality as increased enrollments stress resources and faculty time. An overall outcome is the need for institutions and their faculty to be more entrepreneurial, which in turn may push them away from public facing missions and undertakings. In Kenya, for example, the chair of the nation’s University Academic Staff Union notes that “the average lecturer to student ratio stands at 1:500. . . . In some instances, the ration can go up to 1:900 students. It is this shortfall in the number of lecturers that has resulted in some of our members taking up more than one job. They are simply trying to cater for the huge numbers of student enrolment” (The Guardian, 2015). Faculty simply have no time for much beyond survival as they accept positions at multiple institutions, creating their own version of the United States’ part-time faculty, the so called “road scholars,” who shuttle from institution to institution piecing together part-time work for a full-time living.

### **Faculty agency and public purposes**

Given this context of a worldwide strain on academic professionals, can institutions and academics live up to the public promise of higher education? In the United States the academic job was once inherently shaped by the notion that “the purpose of higher education has historically been both academic and civic” (Rice, Saltmarsh, & Plater, 2015, p. 252), as defined by the American Association of University Professors’ (AAUP) “1915 Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure.” Rice, Saltmarsh, and Plater continued, “It is the larger

social responsibility that led to the profound notion affirmed in the document that “the responsibility of the university teacher is primarily to the public itself” (p. 252). And yet, as the century passed, the U.S. higher education system (and most particularly its research universities) was nicknamed the “ivory tower” for its role in examining society from a distance, a remove thought appropriate to facilitate research for the public good (an approach that some argue is no longer most effective) (Tierney & Perkins, 2015).

In the past few decades, there are countless examples of individual faculty acting on their sense of a personal and professional duty to the public good regardless of institutional priority or support. Three recent books document the extent of the faculty’s continuing commitment to the public or common good. In a book to which I contributed and for which I provided editorial guidance, 24 authors in 17 chapters detail the philanthropic and public good nature of faculty work. Judith Gappa, a leading authority on faculty work in America, says *Faculty work and the public good: Philanthropy, engagement, and academic professionalism* provides “a powerful rationale for broadening the definition of what are the valued contributions faculty members can make to their institutions, disciplines, and the public at large. Inclusion of public service as a recognized and rewarded aspect of faculty work will contribute significantly to colleges’ and universities’ ability to recruit and retain excellent and diverse faculty members” (Gappa, 2015). An essay in this special HLRC places an American-centric analysis in the global context and expands our understanding of what motivates faculty across national and cultural boundaries.

In *Democracy’s education: Public work, citizenship, and the future of colleges and universities*, 34 authors in 27 chapters take the case for faculty work into deep considerations of vocation and civic professionalism. Harry Boyte, the book’s editor and lead author, argues that “higher education is the *anchoring institution of citizenship* and proposes that higher education “needs to *reinvent citizenship as public work*, work with public qualities, and educate our students for citizen careers” (Imagining America, 2015). With case studies from Japan and South Africa, the collection broadens the discussion to the global nature of a shared enterprise—with faculty and their public work at its core.

The third new book, *Publically engaged scholars: Next generation engagement and the future of higher education*, presents 17 essays by more than 20 authors (some of whom have essays in two or all of the volumes) that “provide a window into the emerging citizenry of academe, publically engaged scholars working both on and off campus” (Eatman, 2016). The book provides evidence that the coming generation of academic professionals understands the calling that underlies the AAUP’s foundational commitment that the responsibility of faculty is to the public. —The books sorts observations of these emerging scholars and practitioners into three broad categories: intergenerational dynamics, the power of agency and democratic thinking, and the need to press for the transformation of the culture of academic professionalism.

### **The Individual and collective contributions of faculty**

Taken together, these three volumes speak loudly to the importance that academics attach to their personal and professional calling to contribute in meaningful and intentional ways to the common good, to the public good. While the volumes cited here are decidedly focused on the experiences and hopes of American academics, practitioners, and public policy analysts, there are strands of thought and experience that link U.S. academics to colleagues in other nations. There is a growing understanding that public work is global work. One of the most important umbrella organizations for building global linkages of both institutions and their



respective individual faculty members is the Talloires Network, “an international association of institutions committed to strengthening the civic roles and social responsibilities of higher education.” With over 350 members in 77 nations, the Network members share a belief that “higher education institutions do not exist in isolation from society, nor from the communities in which they are located” (Talloires Network, 2016). The Network has begun a professional development program and provides access to a wide range of resources in other nations, including those in Australia, Brazil, Canada, the Middle East, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela—all for the benefit of faculty and academic professionals worldwide.

Among the parallel developments in other nations, a forthcoming edited volume, *Learning through community engagement: Vision and practice in higher education*, draws on a number of essays to consider how Australian universities’ commitment to the public good is transformative for students, faculty, the institutions, and the public being served. Looking intensely at the intentional remaking of Macquarie University, the authors consider a number of case studies related to their own institution while faculty from the United States, Great Britain and Ireland all provide international contexts. At the heart of Macquarie’s transformation—and indeed at the center of many of Australia’s universities’ concern with educating their citizens for an era of global engagement—are the faculty, whose changes in conceptual and pedagogical approaches to learning have played the key role in re-thinking higher education: “In an era in which there is much attention to individuals’ membership in a transnational ‘community,’ concepts such as global citizenship have emerged with differing expectations and definitions about what preparation for such citizenship might entail . . . . A more pragmatic approach, given the incredible diversity of places, peoples, and times, is to consider what makes citizens prepared to participate fully in the communities of which they are a part (local, regional, national) as well as to understand how local communities are necessarily connected to, interdependent with, and part of a transnational community, if not the whole world” (Bringle & Plater, forthcoming). And that is the work of faculty.

Accordingly, individual faculty are able to do extraordinary things. For example, in 2011, the U.S. state of Georgia passed legislation barring undocumented students from its top five public universities and requiring that the students pay out of state tuition at the state’s other public institutions. Student protests ensued. A group of faculty from the University of Georgia responded by beginning to offer no-cost courses. Inspired by civil rights era schools created to teach African Americans in the south, the faculty called the program of classes “Freedom University” and they provided their services for free (Lohr, 2012). Today, Freedom University exists as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and reports that one in five of its students earns full-merit scholarships to college in other states (Freedom University, 2016). The founding faculty volunteered their time and used their academic expertise to help a group of young people. Putting aside political discussions about immigration policy and state legislation, their actions reflected the notion of education as a public/common good and provide evidence of the ways in which academics act philanthropically in service to society.

Undoubtedly there are many similar examples worldwide. One of the most prominent currently—as the special issue is being assembled—is the recent creation of Kiron University, designed exclusively for refugees flooding Europe in response to unrest in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and other countries in the region. According to the university, it aims not only to provide education and recognized credentials to refugees but to take an innovative approach to higher education, along the lines called for by UNESCO in “rethinking” higher education: “Kiron’s educational vision is not just about providing online courses, and not limited to its current application to the refugee crisis. Rather, we want to reinvent the traditional concept of a university. Our vision is of a new learning environment that is more accessible, more human-

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centred, and more supportive of personal growth” (Kiron University, 2016). With 18 partner institutions and hundreds of volunteers, Kiron serves about 1,200 students. It has also begun academies focused on specific skill and knowledge, including language study and coding, as well as creating direct mentoring programs and study hubs.

Other innovations predating the creativity brought about by the refugee crisis include The University of the People, which “offers a unique learning experience that combines peer-based and collaborative learning. With information technologies and the internet” (University of the People, 2016). In 2014, the university had “700 students from 142 countries enrolled in its degree programs in business administration and computer science. About 30 percent [were] from Africa and 25 percent from the United States, most of whom were born outside the country” (Lewin, 2014). The university was accredited in the United States in 2014, and expected enrollment to increase to over 7,000 students. It relies on volunteer faculty, of whom over 3,000 worldwide have offered to assist—including faculty from many of the world’s most prestigious universities and volunteer academic deans from Columbia and New York University. The founder, Israeli entrepreneur Shai Reshef, ~~has~~ said from the outset “that he aimed to show developing countries that it is possible to provide higher education to all, at a low cost. Classes are deliberately low-tech, with text-based open-source materials, since so many potential students around the world have no access to broadband or video” (Lewin, 2014). Tuition is free with modest charges for proctored exams. Given the purpose of the university in providing access to high quality education to students least able to afford it because of access or cost—based entirely on the work of volunteer faculty—there is no doubt that the University of the People reflects a strong commitment of faculty to serve the global public good. Indeed, it is an institution and academic staff that literally personifies philanthropy.

Philanthropy or “voluntary action for the public good” (Payton, 1988, p. 3) put ~~most~~ simply is the financial giving, volunteerism, and advocacy of private individuals and entities for the wellbeing of others. In *Faculty work and the public good*, I asked scholars from education and philanthropic perspectives to examine if—and how and when—some activities of academic workers in the United States were philanthropic in nature or philanthropically intended in motivation. A related goal of the volume was to determine whether this lens for examining individual faculty behaviors and values could be of use in considering the American workforce of today and looking ahead to what lies ahead. We concluded the volume in some agreement that the framework has value—for example, the efforts of the Freedom University founders, Kiron University, and the University of the People most certainly can and should be viewed through this lens, which provides the language for talking about these kinds of grassroots, socially-motivated initiatives. But, we also concluded that the model has limitations and dangers—for example, if we determine that a portion of what faculty do is philanthropically motivated, might that not lead institutions to use this knowledge to unfair advantage? And, shouldn’t “public work” be at the core to every faculty member’s understanding of their work rather than seen as voluntary or optional? <sup>1</sup>

Thus, although the general outlook reflected in the UNESCO report or the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals may appear daunting and even remote despite the sense of urgency they reflect, examples from the efforts of individual faculty and collectives of academic workers indicate that progress is indeed possible. If one story of successful public work for the common good can be linked to the next, a global movement can be launched with faculty at the core of a shared narrative. It is from smaller and local efforts that the inspiration for

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<sup>1</sup> See Okten and Egron-Polak in this issue for an analysis of the book’s key propositions and their application in an international context.

broader action can be drawn. A commonality of the success stories is the ability of the “agents of the public good” to work in concert with their responsibilities as professionals and their discretion to manage their own activities.

### **A new concept for the work of a global faculty**

A partial list of ongoing conversations regarding the faculty profession follows—as a starter guide to greater shared action, to telling the story of faculty work on behalf of the public good more forthrightly and intentionally. Each item includes a suggestion for how these phenomena can be used for the public good. The list is certainly not exhaustive and, apologetically, it is not as global as it needs to be. The suggestions are meant only to serve as examples of how public-facing values can imbue individual activities and decision-making. Of course global conditions preclude the faculty in many nations and regions from even proposing, let alone engaging, in any of these activities. We face a period when civil discourse regarding complex and value-laden issues is fraught with incendiary and stifling language, when academic freedom in some countries has been effectively eliminated and in others, including the United States, muffled by political correctness. In the face of both urgent need and monitored (as well as self-censored) discourse, these ideas suggest ways forward for those who want (and find they are able) to support higher education’s engagement with the common good.

1. Even as the national context is changing for countries’ respective workforces, the academic workforce is itself more globalized (Plater, 2015). Globalization and worldwide technology provide opportunities for individual faculty to deploy their expertise where it is most needed, to gain improved wages and working conditions, and to build collaborations that span boundaries of all kinds. This can be accomplished through short-term capacity building involvement with post-secondary institutions in other nations, through long-term partnership commitments for joint programs, and through mobility of faculty in their appointments. Although there are intermediaries matching global talent with global academic needs, a more sophisticated and public-minded agency would help facilitate the up-side potential of globalization, minimize corruption, and apply standards appropriate for professionals.
2. Public policy research abounds across many regions of the world with hundreds of organizations taking specific views of the myriad issues that need to be re-thought if higher education globally is to renew and sustain itself with a professional academic workforce. The UNESCO (2015) call for re-thinking should stimulate one or more of the globally-active foundations to sponsor a network or clearinghouse of research on the future of higher education with a focus on the role of faculty—who they are now, how they are prepared, how they are supported, and who they need to be in the future.
3. Faculty may no longer “own” the curriculum, but they manage ~~it~~—and even control it through its implementation, through their teaching and mastery of new technologies and new pedagogies. In an essay on quality and change in higher education, Sir. John Daniel, former Vice Chancellor of the United Kingdom’s Open University, noted that change cannot occur without at least the tacit support of faculty. He cites Tony Bates’ important study of *Teaching in a digital age*: “If universities are to change to meet changing external pressures, this change must come from within the organization, and in particular from the professors and instructors themselves” (Daniel, 2016, p. 59). Is it possible to articulate a code of professional conduct for postsecondary faculty? Might this code inculcate core values based on the principle of duty and accountability to the public, to a global public that shares the single resource of the planet? Is such a shared



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understanding of this duty to the common good possible across religious, political, economic, and social lines? Given the growing institutionalized role of part-time and contingent faculty, additional challenge comes in shaping a code of professional conduct that would be both responsible and reasonable given the absence of a career infrastructure built on full time, long-term employment. What global agency has the respect and trust to even propose a code of professional conduct based on a duty to the common good?

4. Where possible, formal and even informal faculty bodies can have a direct impact on institutional practices. Where shared governance is a recognized principle, the formal channels for shaping policy and practice may be more direct and open. But even where there is no formal structure for faculty participation, informal channels exist. The emergence of global institutional rankings, for example, have been a catalyst for both governments and institutions to distinguish themselves among peers by selectively responding to criteria that could move an institution higher on the listing. In responding to government or institutional priorities, faculty can often propose pathways to achieve their sponsors' goals while also advancing the institution's capacity to advance the common good—perhaps by seeking enhanced recognition from membership in an association such as the Talloires Network or an elective peer reviewed designation such as the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification (which is being piloted in nations outside the United States). As learning outcomes and student competence become more prominent in rankings and systems of quality assurance, what potential exists for developing expectations at the course and certification levels for preparing civic minded and competent professionals?—The U-Multirank (2016) system devised in the European Higher Education Area, for example, contains a number of data elements that lend themselves to faculty in-put and influence, including academic staff with PhDs, international faculty, presence of service learning courses, or international publications.
5. Quality assurance is of growing international importance even as such well-established quality systems as developed through institutional accreditation in the United States, Australia, or the United Kingdom are undergoing public scrutiny and criticism. One essential element in most quality systems is the nature and characteristics of the academic workforce delivering educational services. Some institutional and several program accreditors require information about an institution's contribution to the public good (which necessarily involves describing faculty work); some also ask about learning outcomes related to graduates' readiness to participate in their societal responsibilities as citizens in an interconnected world. A relatively new movement is opening opportunities for sub-degree credential providers and for-profit institutions to seek recognition for their public good contribution through benefit corporation status and certification by B Lab; one of the four main criteria for certification of educational institutions calls for evidence regarding "the company's ability to deliver long term sustained educational services and its engagement with the higher education and broader community to advance higher education and benefit their communities" (B Lab, 2016). As governments, employers, foundations, and transnational agencies of all kinds seek evidence of quality, one dimension that faculty can emphasize and manage more directly than others is evidence related to the common good. This can come in the competence of graduates, in the defined role faculty play in contributing to their communities, and in their own preparation and documented expertise. In a recent document setting forth globally-shared principles for quality assurance, the American Council for Higher Education Accreditation's special group on international quality posed as one of its principles "The quality of higher education provision is assessed by how

well it meets the needs of society, propagates public confidence and maintains public trust” (Uvalić-Trumbić, 2016, p. 23). In analyzing and discussing this specific principle, Fabrice Hénard, Director of Learning Avenue (an education consultancy based in Paris), noted that “few countries have taken into account society’s opinion of what constitutes quality in higher education. . . . rarely is there a nationwide debate on the quality criteria of higher education and on how to match society’s needs with the objectives of higher education. Therefore, the issue of social engagement is unclear and will depend on the importance that Q[uality] A[ssurance] agencies give it as they accredit institutions and their programmes” (Hénard, 2016, p. 25). Faculty can be decisive in determining the importance and potential of their profession in meeting society’s needs, as a duty of the academic profession to the public good.

As noted, this discussion is intended to begin reflection and to encourage conversation among academic professionals about the way they may act individually and collectively to advance a shared narrative about the nature of faculty work, whether as discretionary, and thus philanthropic, activity or as an essential and necessary duty of professionals. As with this special issue and many other publications, international conferences, and global networks of academics concerned about the common good, the more intentional we can be about telling the story of faculty contributions to the public good, the greater the possibility of actually designing the global future we want to inhabit. In the words of the UNESCO (2015) report, that describes itself as a call for dialog, “The development and use of knowledge are the ultimate purpose of education, guided by principles of the type of society to which we aspire” (p. 79). This will be guided by the expectations for the academic professionals responsible for making educational opportunities available.

The UNESCO (2015) report along with the essays comprising this volume make evident that academic workforce situation is neither a “first world problem” nor a condition of the developing world. Rather, it is a dilemma that affects the global community. Without a creative and sweeping approach to resolving (or at least improving) issues of preparation, compensation, recognition of faculty in all their forms, designations, titles, and employment arrangements, it will be very difficult for the public/common good potential of higher education to be fully met. Clearly the academic workforce needs to be re-imagined concurrently with re-thinking the systems of education that will ensure the world and society “to which we aspire.” Faculty in all their diversity are the central and essential ingredient to a successful global educational response to the challenges of an equitable and just global society will create and disseminate the knowledge society needs. Endeavors are underway in many regions of the world. Through publications such as this, we hope to bring these conversations into sharper focus. We hope to align and connect them so that a re-thought approach to higher education might generate discernible results within the relatively short time available. Together we can direct change toward realistic reforms and a new 21st century concept of faculty work on behalf of the common good.

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