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50th Anniversary: Proceedings of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions

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50th Anniversary

Proceedings of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions

Daniel J. Julius¹

Forward

When my longtime friend and respected colleague Jeffrey F. Cross, from Eastern Illinois University, asked that I write a forward to exemplary conference proceedings papers for this special 50th Anniversary issue, I was delighted to do so. I have been involved with the conference Proceedings and contributed to them over the years since their inception in 1973. In that year I was a much younger graduate student at Columbia University and Research Assistant at the National Center, and terribly enthusiastic about attending National Center Annual Conferences and reading the Proceedings. After all, it was one of the few journals exhibiting knowledgeable and reasoned discourse between practitioners and scholars, representing different points of view and organizational orientations, on a most important topic, the nature of and impact of unionization in post-secondary education and related professions. Transformations, brought about by unions and the responses to them, on students, faculty, and staff, not to mention the contours and landscape of higher education, was clearly of interest then, as it remains now.

Moreover, as I perused the names of contributors selected many memories returned. Sidney Hook, distinguished Professor of Philosophy at CUNY, a leading interpreter, and proponent of Deweyan pragmatic naturalism from his years as Dewey's graduate student at Columbia, and unerring critic of 20th Century totalitarian and fascist regimes, was a colleague of my late father. Margaret Chandler, the first woman to be tenured as a professor at Columbia University School of Business, distinguished scholar, and arbitrator, specialized in conflict resolution and collective bargaining. Margaret was one of the authors of the groundbreaking Illini City case studies in labor management relations² at the University of Illinois in the 1960's, a contributing scholar at Yale in seminal studies on management rights, and instrumental in finding external (Ford

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² Labor-Management Relations in Illini City; Vol. I: The Case Studies. W. E. Chalmers, M. K. Chandler, L. L. McQuitty, Ross Stagner, D. E. Wray, Milton Derber and Labor-Management Relations in Illini City; Vol. II: Explorations in Comparative Analysis. W. E. Chalmers, M. K. Chandler, L. L. McQuitty, Ross Stagner, D. E. Wray, Milton Derber

Foundation) funding for the establishment of the National Center for the Study of Collective Bargaining in Higher Education and the Professions then at the Bernard M. Baruch College, CUNY. As my dissertation advisor at Columbia, she was a wonderful mentor and teacher. Nick DiGiovanni, one of the most competent and collaborative legal practitioners in the US and keen observer of unionization in higher education, has been a close friend since we worked together in Vermont in the mid 1970's. Karen Stubaus, an erudite and experienced administrator has been a respected colleague for years, as has Ernst Benjamin, a distinguished scholar and tireless advocate for the AAUP, and I was privileged to work closely with Joel Douglas, a former Director of the National Center. The opportunity to interact, as a scholar or practitioner, with nearly all the authors of these exemplary proceedings papers has enriched my life. As a group they are consummate professionals, scholars, perceptive observers of and active participants in the history, outcomes, and continuing evolution of collective bargaining in post-secondary education; people whose opinions and observations are valued and respected.

The contributions in this special issue speak for themselves. Many were written in a different era but remain relevant and informative. They offer a perceptive glimpse of the arc of unionization as that dynamic process has evolved touching organizational and personal lives. So little and so much has changed over the last 50 years.

Thankfully, I was not responsible for selecting the contributions included here; there were so many outstanding proceedings papers from which to choose, and the editors³ were obligated to make delicate and reasonable choices about the articles showcased in this issue. Under the very capable leadership of Bill Herbert, the National Center has digitalized all proceedings, and I encourage those reading this commentary to avail themselves of the intellectual feast that awaits those who dig into the proceedings all of which are now available online.⁴

One last point about what has been stated and written about collective bargaining in higher education may be worth consideration. Many of the original studies, which received great press (and funding) at the time, were written by eminent social scientists. Their contributions are found in the Proceedings of the 1970's and early 1980's. and are valuable to read. However, many were descriptive or based on full-time faculty attitudes towards unionization and included predictions about where full-time faculty would unionize and other potential transformations to the academic profession. For example, one major study published by the Carnegie Commission in the 1970s, suggested that faculty from the most prestigious universities exhibited attitudes most favorable to collective bargaining and would be most likely to organize. Fifty years later we know how

³ Gary Rhoades, University of Arizona, Jeff Cross,, Eastern Illinois University (emeritus), and Karen Stubaus, Rutgers University.

⁴ See https://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/special_issues.html

faculty responded to questionnaires at that time was, for a variety of reasons, a poor predictor of actual collective bargaining. Instead, it was faculty from public community colleges and larger comprehensive state universities and systems in locales with a history of K-12 unionization and enabling legislation who were organized; “institutional prestige” as it turns out did not presage what occurred over the years. Institutional and demographic variables, coupled with the composition of bargaining units, legal apparatus governing labor relations, and the ability of competing bargaining agents to merge, more often determines which full-time faculty are unionized.

Many other claims originally and currently made about collective bargaining in higher education should be evaluated carefully, over time, before concrete conclusions are drawn. Yet another reason why the Proceedings have been so important. Contributors have been involved as scholars and practitioners in what have been dynamic and changing organizational processes over the past 50 years. I hope readers enjoy these wonderful selections and this special issue.

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