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**IN/STABILITY, IN/SECURITY & IN/VISIBILITY:
TENSIONS AT WORK FOR TENURED & TENURE STREAM FACULTY
IN THE NEOLIBERAL ACADEMY**

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE

This special issue includes a range of articles from individuals working in tenured or tenure stream positions. The question at the core is how neoliberalism is apparent, experienced, and felt in the context of that work. For senior faculty, how has the scope and practice of work evolved, to what effect, and to what detriment? For junior faculty, how are aspirations and expectations for academic work being (un)met? For faculty at the intermediate stage of their academic careers, how is work being seen and practiced differently? For all faculty members, how are changes at work relating to life and identity more broadly? Empirical research, analysis of policy, programmatic and curricular changes, personal reflections, and critical and exploratory essays on points of tensions within this shifting landscape are featured.

The social, cultural, and individual repercussions of neoliberal policies and practices have been well explored and documented. In this journal alone, recent volumes have focused on the shift from tenure stream faculty to contingent and part-time faculty, the creep of commercial and philanthropic bodies into so-called public education, and the turn away from individual and social development toward commercial viability to legitimate teaching and scholarship. Less frequently explored is how neoliberalism is affecting members of the academy who, until recently, have had the benefits of stability, security, and voice – faculty members in tenured or tenure stream positions. Although these academics continue to enjoy relative privilege in the neoliberal academy and in society-at-large, they too share in experiencing the drawbacks of neoliberalism in their work and personal lives. Expectations that staff will “do more with less,” forego salary increases that keep pace with inflation, secure outside funding for research, and adopt a hyper-competitive mindset, all while exposing themselves to new forms of surveillance to check compliance, are as present in the academy as they are in any other workplace.

In thinking about how to organize the good work that constitutes this issue, we noticed that there were three kinds of articles: empirical research, reflective essays, and autoethnographic pieces that lay somewhere in between. We decided to lead with two empirical research pieces, followed by two autoethnographic articles, and close with two reflective manuscripts. This organization illustrates a continuum of possibilities, a range of perspectives on and approaches to experiencing and making sense of the challenging contemporary neoliberal landscape.

A tapestry of themes emerged in our initial review of the submissions. There were expressions of frustration, confusion, self-doubt, and disenchantment at having to work with competing agendas and priorities, both personal and institutional. Authors also spoke to how, even in challenging times and places, it is possible to find and create opportunities to survive and thrive, individually and collectively.

This issue begins with the contribution by Colleen, who draws on her SSHRC-funded study to engage with perspectives of Elder faculty regarding the impact of neoliberalism on universities. Key themes that she raises include power shifts and displacement, pedagogical shifts and imbalances, and devaluation of the professoriate. This is followed by Michelle McGinn's article, which discusses her study involving tenured or tenure-track academics from a range of disciplines. This submission highlights how, regardless of career stage, participants identified an array of pressures affecting their institutions, their fields, and themselves. Written from the perspective of a novice scholar, Kaela's article addresses impacts of neoliberalism on work and life in the academy. Borrowing from autoethnographic methodology to analyze personal experiences, she describes how neoliberalism affects her learning and work, and the conditions encountered. Sarah Robert then draws on encounters in Argentina and the United States, wherein she negotiated the public role of feminist educational researcher and the private role of mother. Her critical-feminist reflections on positionality in multiple education contexts illuminate how the personal remains political. Next, Dawn Johnston and Lisa Stowe use their experiences coordinating a short-term study abroad program to disrupt common perceptions of these programs within and beyond the neoliberal university. Their counter-narrative asserts that this academic labour is significantly undervalued. In the issue's final article, Sean Murray reviews implications of the vocationalization of higher education for the pedagogical experiences of tenure-track faculty. Focusing on the rhetoric and use of student course evaluations, he outlines impacts of these evaluation tools on career advancement processes and offers possibilities for addressing these developments. Overall, we believe that this *Special Issue* provides a rich and rare portrait of academic lives in the neoliberal university. We thank the journal's editors for extending this opportunity for us to oversee the process of developing this issue, and for contributors' generosity of intellect, spirit and time in responding to our call.

AFFILIATIONS

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