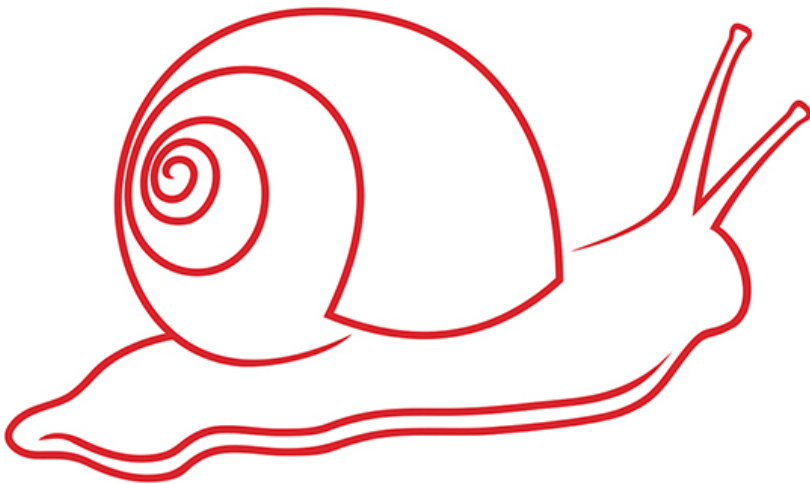


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*The*  
**S l o w**  
Professor

*Challenging the Culture of Speed  
in the Academy*

Maggie Berg and Barbara K. Seeber



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## THE SLOW PROFESSOR

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in the Academy

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# The Slow Professor

*Challenging the Culture of Speed  
in the Academy*

MAGGIE BERG AND BARBARA K. SEEBER

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## Preface

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Western civilization teaches us that displays of busyness are useful and impressive.

Boice, *First-Order Principles*, 38

Moment by moment, when we're rushed, we're simply not the people we're capable of being.

Rettig 74

*The Slow Professor* draws on a number of genres. We have been influenced by the literature on the corporatization of higher education, empirical studies which document the harmful effects of stress and loneliness on physiological and psychological health, popular self-help discourse which emphasizes the importance of work-life balance, and, of course, the key texts of the Slow movement. We have learned a great deal from these schools of thought, and while our book shares some of their characteristics, it is unique in its blending of philosophical, political, and pragmatic concerns. Our book is more optimistic than works on the corporate university, more political and historicized than self-help, and more academically focused than those on stress and the Slow movement. Indeed, this is the first book to date which extends Slow principles to academia.

Both of us are literary critics, and writing this book nudged us out of our comfort zone. It required us to unlearn parts of



our academic training; doing so, paradoxically, allowed us to remember vital aspects of academic life which are in danger of becoming relics of the past. The argument of *The Slow Professor* is supported by empirical studies conducted in fields such as sociology, medicine, information science, and labour studies, and it is also rooted in personal experience. While we worried at times that the book was too personal, we began to see that the inclusion of testimonies was crucial to the project and inextricably linked to its politics. Magda Lewis, in her article “More Than Meets the Eye: The Under Side of the Corporate Culture of Higher Education and Possibilities for a New Feminist Critique,” reminds us that anecdotes are “a fundamental prerequisite to developing new understandings concerning the workings of larger political discourses and structures” (12). The purpose of the testimony, then, is not to reveal “individual characteristics” but to “amplify the political context that make[s] these events possible and ... provide the ground from which a collective conversation may begin about current social, political and intellectual life in the academy” (15). Moreover, as a recent article in the *Guardian Higher Education Network* indicates, “while anecdotal accounts multiply, mental health issues in academia are little-researched and hard data is thin on the ground” (Shaw and Ward). And given this “thinness” of “hard data,” personal narratives can guide our thinking, our actions, and further research. We took a lesson from Marc Bekoff’s comment about the emerging science on animal behaviour: “the plural of anecdote is data” (*Animal Studies Reader* 76). The testimony not only reflects our feminist approach and the current state of research on the topic, but also seeks to shed light on academic experiences which we believe are common, yet unacknowledged. Like Stefan Collini’s *What Are Universities For?*, a book we greatly admire, we hope to “bring the reader to focus on and recognise something hitherto neglected, misdescribed, undervalued, or suppressed,” and, like Collini, we believe that “the process of recognition is always in part an appeal to something which the reader, at some level, already knows” (xiii). Our personal stories, then, complement the data that is accumulating and the

overall point of our book, which is to foster greater openness about the ways in which the corporate university affects our professional practice and well-being.

We hope this book will serve as an intervention. Given that this is our aim, we, at times, adopt the tone of a manifesto. At points, we are deliberately schematic in nature, identifying, in broad strokes, the forces at work in the contemporary university which jeopardize the long-honoured aims of higher education, as well as suggesting a model of resistance. *The Slow Professor* is a call to action and, as such, it is idealistic in nature. While our Slow Professor Manifesto (appended to this preface) has grown out of sustained scholarly work as well as personal reflection, it offers, in distilled form, a counter-identity, which we may claim, to the beleaguered, managed, frantic, stressed, and demoralized professor who is the product of the corporatization of higher education.

It was a careful choice on our part for our book not to grow into a 300-page scholarly tome our colleagues would likely be too busy to read. Our guiding principles were for *The Slow Professor* to be useful, accessible to a variety of disciplines, and affirming. While we acknowledge the systemic inequities in the university, a slow approach is potentially relevant across the spectrum of academic positions. Those of us in tenured positions, given the protection that we enjoy, have an obligation to try to improve in our own ways the working climate for all of us. We are concerned that the bar is being continually raised for each generation of faculty, so the book is also addressed to graduate students.



### **The Slow Professor Manifesto**

We are Slow Professors. We believe that adopting the principles of Slow into our professional practice is an effective way to alleviate work stress, preserve humanistic education, and resist the corporate university. The Slow Movement – originating in

Slow Food – challenges the frantic pace and standardization of contemporary culture. While slowness has been celebrated in architecture, urban life, and personal relations, it has not yet found its way into education. Yet, if there is one sector of society which should be cultivating deep thought, it is academic teachers. Corporatization has compromised academic life and sped up the clock. The administrative university is concerned above all with efficiency, resulting in a time crunch and making those of us subjected to it feel powerless. Talking about professors' stress is not self-indulgent; *not* talking about it plays into the corporate model.

In the corporate university, power is transferred from faculty to managers, economic justifications dominate, and the familiar "bottom line" eclipses pedagogical and intellectual concerns. Slow Professors advocate deliberation over acceleration. We need time to think, and so do our students. Time for reflection and open-ended inquiry is not a luxury but is crucial to what we do.

The language of crisis dominates the literature on the corporate university, urging us to act before it is too late. We are more optimistic, believing that resistance is alive and well. We envisage Slow Professors acting purposefully, cultivating emotional and intellectual resilience. By taking the time for reflection and dialogue, the Slow Professor takes back the intellectual life of the university.

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# Introduction

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The caricature of the professor as a kindly, befuddled person with too much time on his hands bears about the same relationship to current reality as that of the newspaper reporter who, press badge in his fedora, exposes the wrongdoing of bad guys.

Pocklington and Tupper 51

This book began in a series of telephone conversations about coping with our academic jobs. Not reading an email sent by the department chair at 10:45 p.m. until the next morning led one of us into paroxysms of guilt about not working hard enough. Being asked to vet essays for a prize within ten days (without advance notice) prompted a discussion between us about when it is OK to say “no.” Reading Carl Honoré’s *In Praise of Slow* turned our desire to be less harried into a philosophical and political commitment to shift our sense of time. Honoré documents the benefits of extending the principles of Slow Food to other areas of our lives: architecture, medicine, sex, work, leisure, and child rearing. His inclusion in the last chapter of quotations from Dean Harry Lewis’s open letter to Harvard undergraduates entitled “Slow Down: Getting More out of Harvard by Doing Less” (246–8) left us hungering for more. Our telephone conversations became more upbeat as we generated strategies to alleviate our time stress which ranged from checking email at noon to rethinking what we mean by

coverage in a course. One day, one of us laughingly observed, “We should write this down,” and the other responded, “We *should* write this down.”

While we were unflaggingly playing therapist with each other, we came across the first-ever national survey on occupational stress conducted by the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) in 2007. The results – which are statistically representative (Catano et al. 8) – are based on 1470 participants from fifty-six universities across Canada and concur with previous studies in the UK and Australia. Ironically, it was liberating to learn from the Australian study that stress in academia exceeds that found in the general population (Catano et al. 7). We realized we were not alone. Particularly compelling was the significant impact of stress on psychological and physical health: “a relatively large number ... experienced a substantial number of physical (22.1%) and psychological (23.5%) health symptoms, and used stress-related medication (21.8%) over the past year” (Catano et al. 22). While there were differences according to gender, age, faculty rank, employment status, and language, the conclusion is that stress levels are “very high” overall (Catano et al. 38). It turns out we were not constitutionally weak or unsuited for the profession. Reading the survey was like opening a window. We shifted our thinking from “what is wrong with us?” to “what is wrong with the academic system?”

We did not make this shift overnight. Academic training includes induction into a culture of scholarly individualism and intellectual mastery; to admit to struggle undermines our professorial identity. The academy as a whole has been reticent in acknowledging its stress; to talk about the body and emotion goes against the grain of an institution that privileges the mind and reason. Furthermore, the long-standing perception of professors as a leisured class has produced a defensive culture of guilt and overwork. We are busy countering the widely held notion of the ivory tower. How many of us find that we snap in the grocery store when we have to explain yet again, “No, I don’t have four months off in the summer”? Many non-academics would agree with Inspector Morse’s characterization of professorial life:

“Once you’re taken into the university’s bosom ... you are preserved, like Sleeping Beauty, in a rarified atmosphere of hot air and alcohol. Aging is unknown.” We wish. It is not just that non-academics don’t understand what we do. The notion of the leisured professor is actively propagated; according to CareerCast – widely disseminated in the mainstream media – being a professor was ranked as the least stressful occupation in 2013 and the fourth least stressful in 2014. The reality, as William Deresiewicz summarizes, is that “academic labor is becoming like every other part of the American workforce: cowed, harried, docile, disempowered,” but “the stereotype of the lazy academic is, like that of the welfare queen, a politically useful myth” (par. 24).

In the current global context – in which universities are faced more than ever with justifying their existence – to speak of professors’ stress might appear self-indulgent. Indeed, some colleagues have suggested that we stop whining, while others have described our project as brave. These opposing responses articulate our own internal dialogues. Being an academic has privileges not enjoyed by the majority of the workforce: job security provided by the tenure system; flexibility of hours and the changing rhythms of the academic year; and the opportunity to think, create, and pass on our enthusiasms to others. We wanted to become professors because of the joy of intellectual discovery, the beauty of literary texts, and the radical potential of new ideas. These ideals are realizable, even in today’s beleaguered institution, although the ever-increasing casualization of labour makes them harder to attain for many of us. Even the privileges of tenure have a downside. Flexibility of hours can translate into working all the time, particularly because academic work by its very nature is never done. Our responses to student papers could always be fuller; our reading of scholarly literature could always be more up-to-date; and our books could always be more exhaustive. These self-expectations are escalated by the additional external pressures of the changing academic culture. In the past two decades, our work has changed due to the rise in contractual positions, expanding class sizes, increased use of technology, downloading of clerical tasks onto faculty, and the

shift to managerialism – all part of the corporatization of the university. As the protagonist in David Lodge's most recent campus novel, *Deaf Sentence*, explains to a graduate student who complains that her supervisor is never available: "He probably just doesn't have enough time ... He's probably too busy attending meetings, and preparing budgets, and making staff assessments, and doing all the other things that professors have to do nowadays instead of thinking" (94). Reading *Deaf Sentence* provides a constructive contrast to Lodge's earlier carnivalesque campus fiction (*Changing Places* [1975], *Small World* [1984], and *Nice Work* [1988]). In an article in the *Guardian*, Aida Edemariam wonders why the satirical campus novel has been in decline since the 1980s. "Maybe they were all elegies to an idea of the campus," says Howard Jacobson: "Campuses have become tragic places," he adds. In the heyday of the campus novel "you could afford farce," explains A.S. Byatt, because universities were intensely hopeful, whereas "now they're terrified and cowering and underfinanced and overexamined and overbureaucratized" (qtd. in Edemariam 34).

The more we reflected on the links between our own experiences and the findings of the CAUT survey on occupational stress, the more certain we became that individual professors' well-being has far-reaching effects. We believe that our focus on the professor is not entirely self-serving. It goes without saying that stress is bad for the individual and has direct consequences for society. The harmful effects of stress on our well-being, health, and communities are widely documented and now generally acknowledged. What is less evident is that addressing individual professors' stress has political and educational ramifications. Although the original title for our book was *The Slow Campus*, we changed it to *The Slow Professor* to highlight individual agency within the institutional context. Just as Slow Food resists agribusiness by focusing on the small-scale producer, we resist the corporate model's effacement of the role of the professor. In Bill Readings's analysis of the "posthistorical" (6) university, it is "the *administrator* rather than the professor" who is the "central figure" in what is fast becoming a "transnational

bureaucratic corporation” (3). William Deresiewicz calls this “administrative elephantiasis” (par. 17). Similarly, Benjamin Ginsberg, in *The Fall of the Faculty: The Rise of the All-Administrative University and Why It Matters*, writes,

Every year, hosts of administrators and staffers are added to college and university payrolls, even as schools claim to be battling budget crises that are forcing them to reduce the size of their full-time faculties. As a result, universities are filled with armies of functionaries – the vice presidents, associate vice presidents, assistant vice presidents, provosts, associate provosts, vice provosts, assistant provosts, deans, deanlets, deanlings, each commanding staffers and assistants – who, more and more, direct the operations of every school. (2)

Particularly striking is Ginsberg’s analysis of universities’ strategic plans which, rather than identifying unique strengths and future directions, are nearly identical. He concludes that the point is “not the plan but the process” (51): an “assertion of leadership” (49) and the erosion of the power of the faculty. It is the *appearance* of process that counts. Stefan Collini comments that the “fallacy of accountability” is “the belief that the process of reporting on an activity in the approved form provides some guarantee that something worthwhile has been properly done” (*What Are Universities For?* 108). The top-heavy university leads Frank Donoghue, in *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities*, to speak of the professor – defined as “autonomous, tenured, afforded the time to research and write as well as teach” (xi) – as nearing “extinction” (135). He speculates that soon we will be “practitioner-faculty,” to use the term “coined by Apollo” Education Group, one of the largest for-profit educational service providers (97).

A surprising common thread in studies of the corporate university is an emphasis on change being in the hands of individual professors. It seems to be an effort to give us back a sense of agency within a potentially overpowering bureaucracy. While Jennifer Washburn in *University Inc.* does suggest policies for



“safeguarding the universities’ autonomy” (240), she says that equally if not more crucial is the “willingness” of individuals “to stand up and defend traditional academic values” (240). Readings explicitly avoids proposing policy changes, because, as he sees it, doing so serves only to exacerbate what is already a top-heavy institution. He is clear that he addresses his remarks to the professor rather than the administrator and “the scene of teaching” (the title of one of his chapters) rather than the provost’s office. Our focus on the personal might seem solipsistic in the current climate, but we see individual practice as a site of resistance.

Moreover, faculty stress directly affects student learning. We know from experience that when we walk into a classroom breathless, rushed, and preoccupied, the class doesn’t go well; we struggle to make connections with the material and our students. Hard data is beginning to emerge which confirms this. In a 2008 study reported in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* on “Teachers’ Occupational Well-Being and the Quality of Instruction,” researchers conclude that “a combination of high engagement ... with the capacity to emotionally distance oneself from work and cope with failure (resilience) is associated with both high levels of occupational well-being (low levels of exhaustion, high job satisfaction) and better instructional performance, and in turn leads to favorable student outcomes” (Klusmann et al. 702). In other words, professors’ well-being is inextricably linked with students’ learning. It seems ironic, however welcome, that students’ stress is now fully recognized and addressed in the current climate, while their teachers are left to shift for themselves; the cynic may wonder whether this situation is symptomatic of the corporate university’s emphasis on customer satisfaction. A 2014 article in the *Guardian Higher Education Network*, “Dark Thoughts: Why Mental Illness Is on the Rise in Academia,” shows that little has changed in the seven years since the CAUT survey, confirming Claire Shaw and Lucy Ward’s claim that there is a “culture of acceptance ... around mental health issues in academia” (par. 3). Workloads – particularly “demands for increased product and productivity” – have ballooned amidst an

“uncaring academic environment” for faculty and graduate students (par. 13, 18). The notion of students as customers combined with greater reliance on technology has led to the increased blurring of work and life, with, for example, “demands such as 24-hour limit for responses to student queries” (par. 22).

When we look at studies of academic stress, we are struck by how many situations identified as sources of work stress are about lack of time. In the earliest study by Walter Gmelch, first published in 1984 and reproduced in 1993, the top ten self-reported stressors, in order of rank, are (1) “imposing excessively high self-expectations”; (2) “securing financial support for my research”; (3) “having insufficient time to keep abreast of current developments in my field”; (4) “receiving inadequate salary to meet financial needs”; (5) “preparing a manuscript for publication”; (6) “feeling that I have too heavy a workload, one that I cannot possibly finish during the normal working day”; (7) “having job demands which interfere with other personal activities (recreation, family, and other interests)”; (8) “believing that progress in my career is not what it should or could be”; (9) “being interrupted frequently by telephone calls and drop-in visitors”; (10) “attending meetings which take up too much time” (Gmelch 21–4). At least half of the categories (3, 6, 7, 9, 10) are explicitly about time poverty. In others (1, 5, 8), time is implied in measuring productivity: to feel that one’s career is not progressing as it should means fearing it is not fast enough. Summarizing research findings on academic stress in 1987, Peter Seldin observes under the subheading “Too Many Tasks, Too Little Time” that this issue “tops the list of chronic work-related stress situations” (15). The time crunch has only worsened in the last two decades. More detailed and extensive studies were published in 2008 in a special issue on faculty time stress in the *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*. The various contributors to this volume identify additional sources of stress resulting from the rapidly changing university environment. These include “massive technological change” leading to “work overload”; “having jobs with no boundaries” (Miller et al. 3, 6, 12); “self-imposed expectations” which are “exceedingly high”

(Lindholm and Szelényi 20); and “environments of declining resources and increasing pressure to work as efficiently as possible” (Buckholdt and Miller 221). The CAUT report observes that perceptions of the once-desirable academic career “with high social standing,” have changed considerably in the last twenty years. Commenting on previous studies in Australia and the UK, the CAUT team notes that common sources of stress – “workload, degree of task difficulty, and time pressure” – are “aggravated by restructuring, use of short-term contracts, external scrutiny and accountability, and major reductions in funding” (Catano et al. 7). The chief issue in the “Major Findings,” is time: “Work-life balance was the most consistent stress-related measure predicting low job satisfaction and negative health symptoms” (Catano et al. 6). Lack of time, in other words, has serious consequences. As Mark C. Taylor puts it, “Speed Kills,” and the casualties are many: “As acceleration accelerates, individuals, societies, economies, and even the environment approach meltdown” (par. 15).

While much has been written on the corporatization of universities, its effect on time begs further attention: corporatization has led to standardized learning and a sense of urgency. As Bill Readings argues in *The University in Ruins*, education now is “the passage from ignorance to enlightenment in a particular time span” (one which is as short and standardized as possible); “teaching is reduced” to “credit hours”; and “‘Time to completion’ is now presented as the universal criterion of quality and efficiency in education” (127, 128). Frank Donoghue argues that the “market categories of productivity, efficiency, and competitive achievement, not intelligence or erudition, already drive ... the academic world” (xvi). The values of productivity, efficiency, and competition have time as the common factor. Productivity is about getting a number of tasks done in a set unit of time; efficiency is about getting tasks done quickly; and competition, in part, is about marketing your achievements before someone else beats you to it. Corporatization, in short, has sped up the clock. Moreover, Stefan Collini, among others, has drawn attention to the damaging “no standing still” conception of

“excellence” in the current academic ethos: “Standards must always be ‘driven up’. Benchmarks exist to be surpassed” (*What Are Universities For?* 109, 18). It is extremely difficult to resist the universities’ ever onward and upward mentality: “the ‘excellent’ must become ‘yet more excellent’ on pain of being exposed as complacent or backward-looking or something equally scandalous” (*What Are Universities For?* 109). Employing the example of a British university advertising for an administrator who would take the institution “beyond excellence,” Collini points out that “the notion of ‘continuous improvement’ is conceptually incoherent” (*What Are Universities For?* 109–10).

The stakes are high. The opening sentence of Martha C. Nussbaum’s manifesto *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* reads, “We are in the midst of a crisis of massive proportions and grave global significance” (1). James E. Côté and Anton L. Allahar’s *Ivory Tower Blues* is subtitled *A University System in Crisis*. In Ginsberg’s estimation, the “malignant growth” (203) of the all-administrative university is at an advanced stage: “some colleges and universities may be saved, but I fear that it may be too late at most schools” (39). Henry A. Giroux, in *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*, provides yet another alarmist diagnosis: the “attacks” on higher education, he claims, “are much more widespread and, in my estimation, much more dangerous than the McCarthyite campaign several decades ago” (179). Frank Donoghue points out the ubiquity of the language of crisis. We also question the language of crisis but for reasons that differ from Donoghue, who “think[s] that professors of the humanities have already lost the power to rescue themselves” (xi).

We take a more optimistic approach. Ever since Martin Parker and David Jary proposed, in 1995, that higher education now takes place in the “McUniversity,” notable for its “use of the consumer/student as a surrogate surveillance device” (326), there has been resistance to the pervasiveness of managerial power and corporate values. In 1997 Craig Prichard and Hugh Willmott, in “Just How Managed Is the McUniversity?,” identified “some of the contradictions and struggles that make this broad shift

unstable, partial and by no means inevitable” (287). The “imperializing discourses and practices” of management “confront locales in which there is often little enthusiasm for changing established traditions” on the part of those ostensibly managed (313). In 2001, Jim Barry, John Chandler, and Heather Clark argued that “the notion of resistance ... has been underplayed” (87), and their case study of two UK universities concluded that “managerialism is not fully embedded in university life”:

In the face of pressure from very senior levels in their universities and external sources, our academics and administrators *seek* to relate to one another supportively as they *resist* the imposition of control in various ways. (Barry et al. 98, original emphasis)

And in 2012, Joëlle Fanghanel offers this potent reminder: “Academic roles ... are constructed and inhabited through navigating the tensions between structures, the communities in which practice takes place, and academics’ own positions towards structures. Complexity and diversity stem as much from the structural conditions in which academics work (institutions, policy frameworks, academic conventions) as they do from the specific ways in which they respond as individuals to those conditions (their agentic positioning towards those, and their own beliefs about education and the academic endeavour)” (2). All of these researchers identify a space – in the words of Barry et al. – “Between the Ivory Tower and the Academic Assembly Line,” arguing that those in “middle and junior levels ... are actively seeking to keep alive the craft of scholarship by mediating and moderating the harsher effects of the changes through supportive or transformational styles of working” (87). Our chapter on collegiality explores what Frank Martela calls a “holding environment” (85), which offers respite from external managerial pressures and alleviates feelings of helplessness in the face of a putative “crisis.”

Moreover, the discourse of crisis is part of the problem. While in their more recent *Lowering Higher Education: The Rise of Corporate Universities and the Fall of Liberal Education*, Côté and Allahar

qualify their definition of “crisis” as “a turning point ... rather than a situation of impending doom,” they nevertheless maintain that the “university system has developed a set of problems that require some sort of decisive action *now*” (91). We do not deny that intervention is necessary, but we argue that the discourse of crisis creates a sense of urgency – act quickly before it is too late – which makes us feel even more powerless in the face of overwhelming odds. It is ironic that if the corporate model induces panic, so do the very books protesting corporate values. The discourse of crisis also inadvertently encourages passivity: if it’s too late, why bother? We argue that approaching our professional practice from a perspective influenced by the Slow movement has the potential to disrupt the corporate ethos of speed. Slow living, as Parkins and Craig explain, “is not a simple matter of ‘slowing down’ but rather it is more fundamentally an issue of *agency*” (67). Slow Professors act with purpose, taking the time for deliberation, reflection, and dialogue, cultivating emotional and intellectual resilience, able, as Collini puts it, to hold our “nerve” (*What Are Universities For?* 85).

In response to the colleagues who have told us to wake up and get with the program or that they are simply too busy to slow down, we wish to emphasize that the Slow movement is “not a counter-cultural retreat from everyday life ... not a return to the past, the good old days ... neither is it a form of laziness, nor a slow-motion version of life” (Parkins and Craig ix). Rather, it is “a process whereby everyday life – in all its pace and complexity, *frisson* and routine – is approached with care and attention ... an attempt to live in the present in a meaningful, sustainable, thoughtful *and pleasurable way*” (Parkins and Craig ix). And we agree with Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig that the Slow movement has the “potential” to not only “reinvigorate everyday life” (119) but also to repoliticize it (135). Indeed, one of the distinctive features of Slow Food is its combination of “Politics and Pleasure” – the subtitle of Geoff Andrews’s *The Slow Food Story*. The focus on food is “rooted in [the] wider issues” of globalization and environmental concerns (17) while not losing sight of enjoyment. While Ginsberg describes his “proposed

therapeutic regimen” as “bitter medicine” (215), we want a cure that not only will work but also feel good; we want to address both the long term and the short term of one’s daily life. In the chapters that follow we will explore the ways in which the principles of Slow philosophy already mentioned, as well as the emphasis on conviviality and the local, are relevant to addressing faculty stress and to transforming academic practice. As Jennifer A. Lindholm and Katalin Szélényi emphasize, “significant numbers of men and women faculty of all races and across all disciplines and institutional types report that they experience extensive levels of work-related stress. Within this context, it is critical that we ... strive to develop habits of conducting our work and our lives in ways that promote both our own and others’ well-being” (36).

Our book is neither an empirical study along the lines of James Côté and Anton Allahar nor a comprehensive exposé of the corporate university. Bill Readings, Martha C. Nussbaum, Stanley Aronowitz, and Benjamin Ginsberg, among others, have offered brilliant analyses of the consequences and social implications of the corporatization of liberal education. Thoroughly convinced by their arguments, we believe that what is needed now is not another study diagnosing the problem. The contribution we hope to make combines politics with pleasure. What began simply as helping each other became a sustained examination of academia. We see our book as uncovering the secret life of the academic, revealing not only her pains but also her pleasures. Writing this book provoked the anxiety of speaking what is habitually left unspoken, and we continually needed to remind ourselves that the oscillation between private shame and the political landscape would prove fruitful. We came to recognize that anxiety is the inevitable consequence of breaking taboos that are not just current but have a long-standing history: the ideals of mastery, self-sufficient individualism, and rationalism prop up the “old” as well as the “new” university. In fact, patriarchal values opened the door to corporatization.

Perhaps we feel the threat to the university more keenly, situated as we are in the humanities. Ironically, our feelings of lack of productivity and not measuring up have not led us until now

to “read” the institution; our self-blame has played into corporate values. As many have commented, there has been little protest from academics to the attack on the core principles of the university. It is not only that academics are “run off their feet” (Menziez and Newson, “Over-Extended Academic” par. 3) but also that the individualistic and meritocratic values of academic training inhibit collective awareness. While the humanities in particular have been vulnerable in the corporate university, they are paradigmatic of the non-instrumental intellectual enquiry which we need to protect across disciplines. It is precisely this critical thinking that is at the heart of the university as a public good rather than as “a merely sectional or self-interested cause on the part of current students and academics” (Collini, *What Are Universities For?* xi).

We envisioned this project, in part, as a self-help book for academics, and hope that the book is structured for reader ease. After the chapter “Time Management and Timelessness,” which offers an overarching analysis of the temporalities that govern our work and how we might resist them, the rest of the chapters focus on the distinct components of academic work (teaching, research, and collegiality).

Corporatization has engendered pervasive time pressure (and stress). Chapter one begins by examining advice literature on time management targeted specifically at academics. We argue that texts promising to offer solutions to the overwhelmed academic do not deliver. Rather, they celebrate overwork and the culture of speed. Furthermore, the advice literature tends to misconceive the nature of scholarly work and the conditions it requires. This chapter focuses on the connections between time pressure and personal stress, and suggests ways of alleviating the crunch. It provides a foundation for the chapters that follow and which extend the analysis of the deleterious effects of the culture of speed on the individual to an explicitly political argument about its effects on intellectual work, social critique, and engaged citizenship.

In chapter two, “Pedagogy and Pleasure,” Maggie makes the case for preserving the live classroom in the face of increasing



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