

Teaching Faculty, Solidarity and Change

By Monique Tais Brodie, PhD, MBA

When good news is not so great

Recently, an announcement was made informing listeners of change. The announcement confirmed the inevitable. Some people will directly benefit from the change and others not so much. Sometimes, good news is not so great. Sometimes change is just change. Often change seems too late and appears to fall short of addressing the needs of every member of a community. Perhaps the shortcomings of the announcement are not surprising. There is always room for disappointment, anger even. There is no room for animosity or resentment. Owning one's emotional response allows for healthy acceptance and support for others. People are multi-dimensional. Happiness for others does not minimize personal disappointment or compromise the continued collaborative initiative for improvement.

Change that broadly benefits others is not a reason to feel stuck professionally or to criticize the messenger, personally. Change happens when those who are committed, invested keep talking. In this case, an announcement was made outlining upcoming title changes for teaching faculty. The murmuring began immediately. A job title that includes Professor does not make the teacher a learned scholar. An impressive CV of publications, grants and research projects, or institutional service does not indicate excellence in teaching either. Yet, in higher education, assumptions will be made. Regardless, there is still opportunity for institutional change that may better address deeper needs such as professional development, advancement, and inclusion. Whether or not the title changes offer any personal benefit, standing in solidarity, teaching faculty can celebrate professional teaching.

Maybe this is not bliss

Find the career path that will reinforce ideas of self-fulfillment, but avoid idealizing the airbrushed and [Instagram emoji tweets](#) of daily life. Consider that career is the longer-term undertaking of an occupation. This includes vertical and horizontal jobs. Jobs are the individual paid and underpaid opportunities that constitute employment. Sometimes bliss is found on the other side of a mountain of disappointments. Career is a journey; each job is a single destination along the way.

On the journey, education and training are like rest stops. Some rest stops have filling stations and facilities. Others offer a safe space to pull off the highway and enjoy a scenic view. Often, signage will advertise local landmarks such as restaurants or roadside attractions. Avoid spending more time at a roadside attraction than the opportunity is worth. Observing sites from a picturesque vista may be priceless; however, once upon-a-time may be too far away. Besides, there is no evidence to support that a happy life is limited to freeze-frame perspectives, single chance happenings, or [#hashtag](#). Determine if once-in-a-lifetime is sufficient or create a professional development plan that includes action items and goals. Learn how to use the jack and spare tire in the trunk, reduce speeds according to road conditions, and seek mentorship. Ask for directions. Drive past roadside attractions and avoid long lines for cheap concessions. Stop for petrol, maintenance to prevent becoming stranded. Rest, but set limits for how long to wait for magic to happen and then, move on. Maybe this job is not bliss; keep looking. Maybe there is no such thing as bliss; stay curious.

Managing change

Understanding Maslow's lower level of needs fulfillment may also help here. Like [talk therapy](#), title changes produce aesthetic relief. Employment and related job titles are one dimension of personal identity. In the words of Shakespeare, "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Good feelings will not pay down student loan debt any more than anger builds solidarity among lecturers. Still, [wellness](#) measures like yoga and healthy eating do support holistic wellbeing and a positive outlook. Title changes move teaching faculty forward. Teaching faculty can continue to explore ways to move the department forward.

This article is a reflection of action research and objective analysis of human behavior within organization. The opinion expressed here serves as an intellectual contribution about matters that matter in the workplace. The end is self-soothing but the means is to support CPT readership and to keep the momentum going. Change does not just happen. People change and people make change happen. Today, title changes; tomorrow...

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