

Bedford / St. Martin's

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
- [RSS](#)



[Adjunct Advice](#)

« [Job Search Wikis](#)

[Live at the C's: Tuesday, April 1, 2008: Rain](#) »

[Multi-Layered Mentoring: How the University Works Review](#)

March 31, 2008 3:35PM

[Marc Bousquet](#)

[How the University Works: Higher Education and the Low-Wage Nation](#)

Foreword by Cary Nelson

New York University Press: New York, 2008

[A How-To for Adjuncts and Tenureds Alike](#)

[How the University Works](#) (HTUW) is mentoring in action. Marc Bousquet's text is tight, intelligent, convincing, well-structured, solidly supported, and engaging. No doubt about it, as academic texts go, HTUW is a great model. If you are trying to get published, select one of his six essays, examine it closely, and you have a great model to follow. If you are curious about how to put a book together on a general theme, but you have a collection of different but related ideas, then HTUW demonstrates how this can be done as well. More importantly, if you find critical thinking, critical education, or activism important, Bousquet demonstrates how you can combine your ethos, pathos, and logos, bolster your vita, and work towards a better society.

Marc Bousquet's [book](#) is not just for adjuncts — it is a great model for tenureds. HTUW demonstrates an effective way to be an ally of the contingent academic labor movement. This is seen in exactly what Bousquet does not say. Bousquet does not dwell upon the oppression or extraction that he and other full-timers experience — the emphasis is placed on the subject: adjuncts. Few adjuncts want to read about the abuse of tenureds — that's already been well-researched, documented, and discussed. Adjuncts are the growing and invisible giant in academic labor, and there is very little written about us. If a book claims to be about adjuncts, it should focus on adjuncts. Bousquet's book does just this.

Fortunately, Bousquet does not tell the contingent academic labor movement what to do. Few things are more condescending or tiresome than the paternalistic, "I remember when I was an adjunct. . . . You really ought to do X." Really? Thanks for asking. Adjuncts, by definition, are subordinate. We do not need to be reminded of that by "allies." When you look at the course loads we carry and the contributions we make to higher education, we are equals. We are colleagues in all but pay, benefits, academic protection, and name. A large number of adjuncts carry course loads and responsibilities that exceed our tenured colleagues. Bousquet acknowledges many of these points and does not pretend to be an adjunct's friend or boss. Instead, HTUW positions him as a model ally.

Finally, Bousquet provides history and context for the academic labor struggle, the evolution of extractive Toyotism in academia, and the creation of a hegemonic management culture bent on infesting the professoriate with administrative surveillance and reporting methodologies while loading this work on professors. Bousquet's exposure is essential because it dispels the illusion that higher education somehow fell into its current predicament. We are where administration wants us. But like all managers, they want even more profits. Simultaneously, administrators have not been content in allowing their Toyotism and Total Quality Management to trickle down like their profits. Instead, administrations' fire hose tactics blast their practices, theories, and methods into crowds of instructors — anyone who protests or resists is blasted to the ground. Those who attend administration-sponsored workshops get financial, political, and professional kudos; those who do not are punished by being ignored, having funding reduced, or being considered tainted goods.

Reading [How the University Works](#) provides much more than the elements above. Bousquet packs so much good information in his text that a single review cannot cover all of the content. Fortunately, picking up a copy gives you the chance to read, reread, and review some of the sources he cites. Not only is this text a powerful model in so many different ways, it also acts as a truth-teller: administrations have been waging a focused, brutal, and directed class war against academic labor — adjuncts in particular.

Our exploitation is not an accident. And, as Bousquet echoes in his text, only collective action can change the status quo.

This entry was posted on Monday, March 31st, 2008 at 3:35 pm and is filed under [Jobs](#), [The Academic Scene](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

3 Responses to “Multi-Layered Mentoring: How the University Works Review”

- 1.  [Job Interview](#) Says:
[May 10th, 2008 at 7:03 am](#)

Thanks for this article; my fiancé is going to a new job as yeppp a university adjunct. I guess she will need some advice of this type! Sometimes you got to be amazed over Internet and the power of all information on the web.

- 2.  [Buy Isk](#) Says:
[August 30th, 2008 at 1:07 pm](#)

Really a very helpful article. Nice to know how a university administration work properly. Very good knowledge

- 3.  [wooden trunk](#) Says:
[November 3rd, 2008 at 4:52 am](#)

Many thanks for sharing your recording with us.

Leave a Reply

Name (required)

Mail (will not be published) (required)

Website

feet,



Type the two words:



Submit Comment