2.

A Changing College Community

> *It used to be that there were—in the prior version of the college pool, which has now been remodeled to be much deeper and colder and not suitable for children—but there was another college pool, and everybody's kids had lessons there every Sunday. You know, like custodial workers and faculty, and it was just a really nice thing. We don't have that anymore, because the pool isn't like that—and custodial employees aren't college employees, exactly.*
>
> *—faculty member, Pseudonym College, interview*

One familiar public discourse defines colleges and universities as constituting spatial regions distinct from, and indeed quite different from, "the real world." Sometimes the tone of this comparison celebrates the college as an idyllic haven from the unfortunate realities of the broader society; other times, the real world is invoked with a sneer to dismiss colleges as delusional and self-important. Either way, the idea tends to imply that events on college campuses have limited relevance to events off of them.

At the same time, however, it would be hard to deny that institutions of higher education play a number of key roles in the production of the social order in the United States. College attendance, if not always graduation, is a major signifying credential for the exercise of ruling-class privileges, and campuses are key sites for the accumulation of what Bourdieu calls social and cultural capital. Then, too, as employers, as social institutions, and as variously constituted communities, colleges and universities must constantly interact with the same systems—and indeed with the same people—as other institutions in the United States do. I assert that, far from being an isolated anomaly, the college is in fact an integral part of the social order it inhabits. More specifically, colleges both help to sustain, and are sustained by, broad systems of inequality.

This kind of claim—that colleges are actually integrally connected to the society they inhabit—is part of the ideological grounding for many political mobilizations that call for colleges to take increased responsibility for their social and economic impacts. I think not only of living wage campaigns but also of fair-trade and anti-sweatshop campaigns, divestment and shareholder responsibility campaigns, and struggles around gentrification, among others. At the same time, there is something to the idea that colleges are in some ways anomalous among institutions—that there is something unique and special about them. Interestingly enough, these two apparently almost contradictory ideas—the continuity and the singularity of colleges among United States institutions—can both be mobilized to argue that colleges should take seriously their social responsibilities. In this chapter, I investigate how people talked to me about what kind of an institution Pseudonym College is—and how it is changing.

The college community: family, small town, school, and business

When I asked interview participants what were the best things about Pseudonym College as a workplace, their responses often emphasized personal relationships within the institution. Descriptions of the college as a small community—and the driving metaphors of the college as a family and the college as a small town or village—surfaced over and over. Not everyone constituted the boundaries of this community in the same ways; for many people, the salient community was some subset of the college as a whole. For instance, a number of staff members, especially non-exempt staff, praised their particular departments, their bosses and co-workers, and took care to note that they could not speak for how it was in other departments; some reported hearing rumors that departments other than their own could be more contentious. Senior staff, on the other

hand, tended to speak expansively about the community as a whole. The connotations of the "family" metaphor are therefore quite different in the following two quotations, the first from a non-exempt staff member:

> Some of the best things about working for Pseudonym are that it's like a family. People help each other out when needed, especially in our department…. We always trade off favors. I'd say that's the biggest reason I stay at Pseudonym College.

and the second from a senior administrator:

> We do strive very hard to have all people in the community, whether they're support staff or—exempt or non-exempt support staff—or faculty, feel like they're part of the Pseudonym College family. It's been that way for a long time.

In the first quotation, the metaphor of a family describes a set of individual personal relationships and exchange interactions. The second quotation deals more with a policy stance by the administration. Since hundreds of people are involved in the college community, it is hard to imagine how their network of relationships could resemble a single family in the same personal sense as in the first quotation. A metaphor like that of the small town might have been more scale-appropriate for describing the whole college community. The senior administrator's choice to invoke "the Pseudonym College family" thus seems more rhetorical than directly analogous. This use of "family" echoes the language many contemporary large corporate employers adopt. This linguistic choice appears aimed at promoting a sense of community among employees, but on this level it is an impersonal kind of community, grounded in some kind of shared identification with the institution rather than in direct personal interaction. The term "family" in this context evokes the ways that states deploy such biologizing and intimate terminologies to promote sentimental attachment to the imagined community of the nation, and more

recently the growing trend of corporate management using these kinds of terms to talk about the relationships between their employees and companies. (See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities.*) Clearly this administrative focus on the large-scale, official community does not prevent personal-scale, reciprocal relationships from developing, as described in the first quotation. Nonetheless, there seems to be some disconnect between the two speakers' conceptions of what community means for the campus.

Of course, while such personal relationships may be one of the best things about working at Pseudonym, there is no inherent reason that they should not develop in non-college workplaces as well. Similarly, when people spoke of the relative openness of the administration to community feedback, this might be true of even a non-college employer—and was not always so true of this college employer, according to some accounts. By contrast, some of the other attributes that many people cited as virtues of the Pseudonym workplace seem more directly connected to the traditions of its college-ness. Many people described their commitment to the college's educational mission, and a sense of shared values with the institution and its other employees. As one exempt staff member said, "It's not just a work environment—it's being part of something. It's being part of educating students." Some people spoke of the energy and vitality that the presence of students brings to the workplace. Of course, people also mentioned the concrete benefits of working at Pseudonym College in particular—benefits like full tuition remission for employee's children to attend the college, a sliding-scale child-care center, the summer and winter breaks in the college calendar, and the cultural and sporting events. Some said that these benefits were the most important factors in their

choice to continue to work at the college. Some of these benefits also function as the kinds of shared experiences that can build relationships.

In the epigraph to this chapter, a faculty member nostalgically recollects an era when shared use of a swimming pool nourished a sense of college community. It is interesting that the notion of family—this time in the literal sense of people's children—reemerges to animate this narrative of a lost golden era. Again, the invocation of family evokes strong sentiment and a set of values distinct from the single totalizing value of efficiency. A number of people mentioned the college's "family-oriented" character as an important benefit of the college workplace, and at least one staff member said that the college's child-care center is the primary reason they stay at Pseudonym. Unlike the swimming lessons, however, the child care—despite its sliding scale—is not affordable for most custodial workers. Perhaps the shared experience of parents at the child-care center might form community in the same way as their shared experience at the poolside used to; however, custodial workers and probably most dining services workers as well are now likely to be excluded from a community thus constituted.

As the faculty member points out at the end of that lyrical anecdote, the people who do these jobs are no longer direct employees of the college, as they once were. Pseudonym now has a contract for dining and custodial services with the major corporation Unnamed Contractor. From my contemporary vantage point, of course, I cannot know how accurate is the professor's romantic account of a bygone community. I can see clearly, however, the profound confusion and nervousness that flowed through conversations about the present role of the Unnamed Contractor workers in the Pseudonym College community. For a whole constellation of reasons, many members of

other college constituencies were hesitant to describe the contracted workers as full members of the college community, or to present a clear idea of what should be their role in campus decision-making. A number of people expressed unease with the ethics of the whole project of contracting out work to a private corporation (a process also known as outsourcing or subcontracting). In Chapter 3, I will dwell in more detail on these thorny questions of outsourcing and how, from a certain perspective, subcontracting may be seen as conflicting with the underlying values of the institution.

The classical sociologist Emile Durkheim described how social solidarity may grow out of a shared experience—like everybody taking their kids to the same pool—or of interdependence. Does a sense of solidarity, of one kind or another, ground today's Pseudonym campus community? Whether intentional or not, in a sense we may read the remodel of the pool—into something "much deeper and colder and not suitable for children"—as an undermining of one aspect of shared experience, and hence potentially a diminishment of solidarity.

Surely, like so many of the changes that take place on college campuses, the remodel of the pool was undertaken for some sound reason contributing to the educational mission of the school. Indeed, I will argue that the project of corporatization of the college—of which subcontracting is one aspect—is defined in part by a kind of single-mindedness, a strict definition of the college's primary purpose and an unequivocal prioritizing of that purpose. In the following discussion of corporatization, it will be useful to bear in mind the Durkheimian question of what happens to a sense of shared community identification, of community solidarity, when a school is run with the mono-focused ethos of a business.

Corporatization: the bottom line is the bottom line

> *"Corporatization of the university" here means a series of developments that have made the presence of corporations on university campuses and boards more prevalent and powerful, intensifying the commodification of university education by introducing free-market management practices aimed at making universities more efficient and profitable.*
>
> *—Amy Freeman, "The Spaces of Graduate Student Labor: The Times for a New Union," 246-7*

> *A commodity is something created, grown, produced, or manufactured for exchange on the market…. The commoditization of higher education, then, refers to the deliberate transformation of the education process into commodity form for the purpose of commercial transaction.*
>
> *—David Noble, "Digital Diploma Mills," 45*

Surprisingly enough, administrators and senior staff who spoke with me were quick to praise the students of the Fair Labor Campaign for their hard work, their commitment to the living wage effort, their smart scholarship—but above all for their savvy, reasonable acceptance of budgetary realities. In Chapter 4 I will further explore the relationship between the college administration and the student labor activists. Here, I want to focus on the perspective that administrators were so pleased to find that these students shared: the belief that fiscal constraints are more real than anything else, that the bottom line is always, finally, the bottom line.

A number of binary oppositions are bound together in the administration's discourses about student activism, with the most prominent ones being the oppositions of idealism versus pragmatism and antagonism versus cooperation. Coming down squarely on the side of pragmatism and of cooperation, the administrators linked these virtues to a conviction that the numbers of the budget are fundamentally more real and immutable than any other considerations are. Being practical, in their frame, means accepting fiscal limitations, and cooperation means being willing to be constrained by authorities'

interpretations of the realistic possibilities of the budget. Student activism, they claim, is fine with them as long as it works within this framework—one which yields the legitimate ground of final decision-making to the administrators who control the budget.

Some student campaigners I spoke with indeed seemed to share this perspective. One student in the campaign told me they personally came to see economics as the most useful field to pursue,

> because in the end it all boils down to numbers. You can't conceive any social policy, or any public policy, unless you have a firm understanding of what the costs are. And business has so much influence, so if you can speak their language—which I think we actually did very well—you can do a ton.

Note that this primacy of economics would not be a self-evident conclusion to all observers. One could just as easily argue that an understanding of history, of sociology, of politics, or of psychology is fundamental to policy-making. However, it is harder to dispute the student's second claim—that the primary reality of the budget is indeed the ideology of the college's senior administration. As the student points out, buying into this discourse makes some space for activists to maneuver for their goals, as the Fair Labor Campaign did.

The amount of possible leverage here is limited, however; compared to administrators, students will always be considered relatively ignorant of the budget, despite the economics expertise they may acquire. This is, in part, a function of students' comparatively short span of time at the college (an issue that will arise again). One exempt staff member told me:

> Do students understand how the budget works? I didn't understand how the budget worked until I sat in on [a few years] worth of meetings on the budget. And I still now don't have a clear idea on every aspect of the budget. So I can't believe that students have a clear understanding of the budget, in terms of—I mean, down to material detail—you know, a tenth of

> a percent of the total budget. Do students understand how all that's being spent? I don't think so. I don't, and I've been here for [many years], so I've got a feeling that students who have been here for nine months probably don't get it either.

Students and other activists may be able to generate some leverage from their knowledge of economics, but ultimately a few people in positions of authority can always claim specialized knowledge of the real, practical, and immutable budget.

This privileging of the budget over other considerations is hardly unique to the administration of Pseudonym College. I label it one aspect of corporatization because the focus on the bottom line is a fundamental tenet in the business world. Indeed, it is a pervasive ethic in the United States generally; even non-profit organizations are run by boards of directors who are structurally charged with minding fiduciary responsibilities as their primary concern. Further, I do not deny that budgets are in fact a real or important concern—what I want to highlight, rather, is the non-inevitability of considering them *most* real, the final limiting factor. In fact, I argue, budgets, like other concerns, are subject to some fluid reconsideration of what is possible; budgets can shift somewhat in response to other concerns. Consider, for instance, the account one student gave me of an effort to get the Pseudonym College bookstore to adopt an anti-sweatshop Code of Conduct. At first the response was that it would be financially unfeasible:

> So we sort of came in and we said, "This is something that we think you guys need to do," and they said, "Whoa, that's totally unrealistic. We can't—we have no idea where these people are getting their clothes from. It'll make our prices go up. We can't do that."

The students then set up a web site which would compete with the bookstore by helping students acquire their textbooks online more cheaply. When the students confronted bookstore authorities with the threat of publicizing their web site to the student body,

> They were like, "Don't do that! [laughs] We'll sign the Code of Conduct." And so I think that sometimes it was them knowing or thinking that we had the big stick.

Of course, in this case, it was another kind of budgetary pressure that the students brought to bear. Nevertheless, it also revealed the mutability of what the authorities had first claimed (at least in this student's narrative) were budgetary constraints absolutely preventing them from signing the Code of Conduct. The living wage initiative, too, demonstrates the possibility of what was initially claimed to be financially impossible. Nonetheless, despite such examples of how, in the face of political pressure, the borders of fiscal possibility can grow fluid, senior administrators and others at the college continue to claim that everything must defer to the budget.

This belief in the bottom line is part of a broader, business-oriented discourse that I heard from administrators and senior staff and that, I argue, reflects a trajectory of corporatization at Pseudonym College. This business discourse turned up in language about efficiency, and in particular in framing the educational endeavor as a service provided to student consumers. One senior administrator described it to me this way:

> Well, the campus is here for one reason, and one reason only, and that is to provide a high-value, high-complexity service to the students. And it's a complicated transaction. It's not like telephone service. It's not like going to the library and asking for a book. It's a twenty-four-hour service in which part of what you're doing is challenging students. It's not the kind of service where I say, "I just want to make you happy, Alexandra, because if I make you happy then I've succeeded at Swarthmore."[1] No. I want to challenge you, Alexandra, I want to push you, I want to test you, I want you to hone

[1] The administrator here names me and the college that I attend, Swarthmore, drawing an analogy to Pseudonym. It is worth noting that the administrator here highlights my student status, positioning our relationship as administrator/student (despite our different institutions) rather than as research participant/researcher. While I sought to present myself primarily as a researcher and outsider—and at least one or two interview participants initially mistook me for a graduate student—it was unavoidable that many participants should read me primarily as a student like the students of Pseudonym College. This is of course in many ways an accurate reading, and I know that it played a strong role in shaping the personal dynamics of the interviews.

> your intellect and your values. So everything that students experience while they're on the campus, and indeed while they're off the campus but part of the college, everything that they experience contributes to what is the product or the service that we're trying to deliver, which is intellectual and personal growth of a high order.

I quote this passage at length in order to highlight the tension between the administrator's extended emphasis on complexity and the limiting character of the opening: "Well, the campus is here for one reason, and one reason only…" In a sense the whole rest of the paragraph strives to mitigate the single-mindedness of that beginning by characterizing this single-minded purpose as expansive and holistic. Nonetheless, to claim that the college exists only to provide a service to its students—no matter how broadly that service is conceived—is to choose a narrow and undeniably corporate view of the social role of an institution of higher education.

It is true that liberal arts colleges like Pseudonym, as opposed to universities, traditionally focus more on undergraduate education than on faculty research. To couch this educational focus in terms of providing a service, however, does two limiting things, in my view. First, it cements the student-faculty relationship into a one-sided transactional framework in which faculty transfer knowledge and skills to students. Compare this service model to a conception of education as a process of apprenticeship, in which students learn from faculty as they work together. Packaging school as only a service, no matter how complicated or challenging, says that the one role of a student is to learn, the one role of a faculty member is to teach, and the only important outcome of their interaction is the transfer of educational capital. This definition obscures the possibility that faculty and students engage together in a process of reciprocally learning

from one another, as well as the possibility that their collaborative engagement could actually be a part of the central academic project of generating knowledge.

While this administrator confines education narrowly to the paradigm of a service, they also take care to define that educational experience broadly as extending beyond what goes on in the classroom. This emphasis reflects a gradual change taking place in the institution. As several people explained to me, Pseudonym and other colleges like it have in recent decades seen the emergence of a new professional class whose work focuses on the co-curricular aspects of students' college experience. These are jobs that faculty members used to fulfill in addition to their academic work. As one exempt staff member explained,

> [O]ne of the reason the administrative ranks have grown, too, over the past couple decades, is because faculty don't want to do that work. They don't want to make financial aid decisions, or admission decisions, or be responsible for monitoring students in residential life. Or they in fact don't want to be responsible for always setting all the budget technicalities. So there's a specialist class in the higher education ranks of administrators.

Yet between faculty and this new class of administrative staff has arisen an underlying current of contention. Despite perhaps not wanting to do these co-curricular tasks themselves, some faculty members are reluctant to acknowledge the value of administrative staff to the institution, and many exempt staff told me that some faculty members treat them with condescension and disrespect. One exempt staff member said:

> Some faculty members spend most of their time when they're on committees talking about how we have too many staff at the college. Things like this. And they have very strong voices. They're on their Faculty Executive Committee. And that's sort of their bone to pick, and every time they get the chance, they mention it.

When they spoke about their class conflict with faculty, staff members spoke to me about at least three distinct, though closely connected, issues. One was the personal disrespect that some faculty members showed for staff and their work; another was the special institutional privileges that faculty members enjoy; and a third was the privileged role that faculty occupy in college governance. However, while these three issues are theoretically distinct, in many situations of practice they prove almost impossible to disentangle. For example, over and over, staff members told me they were happy to defer to faculty on academic issues, but resented faculty's disproportionate influence in matters of institutional policy pertaining to all employees, such as the committees that make recommendations on pay and benefits.

The apparent peevishness of those faculty members who resent administrative staff's presence on campus is likely in part a function of faculty elitism, and in this sense the senior administrator's acknowledgement of the importance of co-curricular work (in the extended quotation, above, about the institution's educational purpose) is an anti-elitist move. Indeed, from this perspective, the whole discourse of education as a service has democratizing implications, because it places faculty and administrators on a relatively equal footing as just two different kinds of professional providers of educational services. Many administrative staff members spoke to me in the language of professionalism, asking that the value of their work and their professional expertise be honored. One exempt staff member told me that they and their colleagues want to have "the institution and faculty colleagues view them as, if not equals, people with just as much, kind of, professional ability as they do, just in a different field." Another pointed out:

> I've always said, students spend two-thirds of their time outside the classroom, not in it. So what's going on there? Yeah, they're doing their work, but how are they doing their work, in what environment are they doing their work? Who's helping them do their work? Who's assisting them in that process? It's not the faculty, in that sense.

It is worth noting the limited scope of these arguments about respect for college employees, in terms of how they might bear on the status of support staff and contracted employees at the college. The professionalism argument makes the explicit claim that administrative staff's skills place them on the same level as faculty; the implicit claim contained therein is that others without comparable skills do not belong in the same category. In some sense, when they make the professionalism argument, members of the emergent class of staff professionals align themselves with the dominant faculty, rather than with the subordinate support staff, in the traditional academic order. In this sense, the democratizing potential of this discourse is limited. Perhaps the discourse about how administrative staff's work supports the project of student education has some more democratizing potential—after all, through their work, clerical, custodial, and food service workers all affect students' college experiences as well. Nonetheless, this framing sets up the terms for an argument about whose work is more central or more influential in shaping students' educational experiences, an argument which has the potential to re-inscribe rather than undermine hierarchy.

At the same time, other anti-hierarchical discourses are emerging to draw the parallel between an unfair faculty/administrator opposition and an unfair administrator/support staff opposition. As one administrator told me,

> You know, we could all tell you stories about the way we feel we're treated at times that really distinguish the fact that you're not as good as a faculty member. That same thing, though, is necessary between all the faculty and administration together, and the support staff.

In Chapter 3 I will deal more with the democratizing potential, as well as the limited scope and ambiguity, of Pseudonym's recent move towards undermining the distinction between administrative and support staff—a move which, in turn, continues to exclude subcontracted employees. But let me return to the question that drives this chapter: what kind of an institution is Pseudonym College? What principles define its essence?

I have already suggested that an elitist attachment to their own position of privilege may partly motivate some faculty members' reluctance to accept administrative staff as having a status equal to their own in the institution. However, broader principles are at stake for faculty as well. It is easy to see how the tradition of faculty governance is elitist and exclusive of other constituencies in the institution, but the question of yielding up governance is complicated in a way that again relates to the theme of corporatization. I want to make the claim that in a certain sense faculty governance is also a radical tradition—and that faculty attachment to their power over college decision-making, while anti-democratic, also reflects a certain kind of idealism.

Recall that I said defining the college's mission as providing an educational service was limiting in two ways. The first was that it frames the student-faculty relationship as the unidirectional transfer of a commodity, even a complex and intangible one, rather than as a collaboration in generating knowledge. The second is that it denies that the college has a broader social responsibility—that the institution has various important roles to play, of which educating students is only one.

Traditional rhetoric about higher education defines its mission as broad and plural. For instance, the prominent value of academic freedom is not simply a matter of making sure professors have the freedom effectively to educate students in their classrooms. Academic freedom is about protecting a space where people can develop and exchange controversial ideas—because we think society at large benefits from having all these different ideas around, and because we think there may not always be space for unpopular ideas to grow outside the space of colleges and universities. In the face of McCarthyism, for instance, or in the recent Ward Churchill controversy, when people have risen to the defense of academic freedom, they have spoken not primarily on the grounds of preserving the privilege of faculty as a special class of people; rather, they have generally argued that, for the good of our democracy, we all need to know that somewhere it is still safe for people to make any and all critical political analyses. The function that the senior administrator describes fulfilling for students—not just making them happy but rather challenging them, pushing them, testing them, honing their intellects and values—is what a university is supposed to do for society as a whole. The university fulfills a function integral to society precisely by establishing a space which is separate from the rest of society and which operates according to different rules.

Much of the world outside the university, of course, follows the rules of the marketplace. In a sense, the idea that the production of knowledge should be conducted under special protected conditions implies a critique of the market system. The university says the market will not value ideas correctly, and it presents an alternative model of value. It acts as a sanctuary or oasis, a protected space, which is to say that there is something hostile and destructive about the market forces outside its walls. In

this sense the university is structurally radical. Furthermore, not only do these alternative space exist, but, in the United States, all the children of privilege (middle class and affluent) are required to pass through them on their way to credentialization. Perhaps universities can be framed as necessary anomalies, moderating institutions that correct for any problematic extremes of the market, and in this sense may function to support the status quo. However, insofar as they can be framed as prototypes, alternative models for how broader communities might be organized, universities have the potential to operate as engines for change.

How far-reaching is the difference between a college and a university? In the corporatizing discourse, the college not only focuses on undergraduates and education as opposed to graduate students and research; it also denies the social responsibility of providing an alternative to the marketplace—indeed, it denies that its values are distinct from, and oppose, the market. The idea that you can and should carry on the education of students in an ordinary market-driven context undermines the longstanding, potentially radical tradition of the institution of higher education as a place apart.

The corporatized model of education is not amoral; it simply replaces the traditional ethos of the institution with its own, very different moral imperative. When you add together the conviction that only the budget is real and the narrow conception of the mission as singularly service-oriented, then what you get is the principle that at all times as much as possible of the institution's money should be spent on providing the service of education. But whereas the traditional concept positioned the university to be the iconoclastic moral visionary showing the way for the rest of society, the corporate model positions the institution to follow the same market ethos that everybody else follows.

From a pro-market perspective, this might be read as an anti-elitist move, pulling education down from its pedestal and inviting the professorate to join the real world of fiscal bottom lines. From the perspective of activists who envision alternatives (such as living wages) to the values of the market economy, however, losing the ideal of the university as a unique institution with unique social responsibilities means losing a highly mobilizeable discourse.

It is in the context of this conversation about the narrowing of the college's vision that the issue of faculty governance becomes salient. Corporatization is not only a process of shifting discourses, but also of structural change. Recall that for-profit companies are run by boards of directors whose primary obligation is always to the bottom line and to the interests of the shareholders; non-profits are also run by boards of directors, who serve a mission but who also have a primary legal duty to the financial health of their institutions. In nearly all organizations in the United States, then, the budget is structurally the most real consideration for those who make the decisions.

Faculty members, by design, have a different set of commitments. Surely most do care about the fiscal health of the institution, but unlike board members, they are not legally constrained to place it above other concerns. Faculty are positioned to be invested in a lofty vision of the goals of the academic project, because their own labor is—in a traditional conception of the institution—central to that project. Surely tenure and the long time-scale of their involvement with the college help shape faculty members' commitments as well. But the central point I want to make is that, because the budget is not their primary work, their area of expertise, or necessarily their first priority, faculty members are particularly free to identify with a plural conception of the values of the

college. Given this, faculty governance—the idea that the faculty as a body play a serious role in college decision-making, instead of or in tandem with the budget-minded board and administration—is a radical idea. As Jeffrey Goldfarb writes in his book *Civility and Subversion: The Intellectual in Democratic Society*, "All American universities, then, have built into their organizational structure a tension between the academic, professional model of self-governance and the corporate model of administrative control." (128)

Hence the faculty's ambivalence about processes that undermine their governance, even in the service of apparent democratization. One professor described for me a feeling that the faculty is under threat:

> [Faculty] also see themselves and their traditional positions being kind of chipped away at by the professionalization of these other groups at the college. Like, I mean, the group that comes to mind most immediately is Student Life people…. Plus the sort of corporatization of colleges and universities in general, and a sense that increasingly, as this guy [name of faculty member] in the [name of department] department here has put it, rather than driving the bus, the faculty increasingly is just a sort of passenger on the bus, and somebody else, or something else, is actually driving the bus at these colleges.

The real power struggle here, if one can couch in such terms what is surely a very civil interaction, is between faculty and the board and senior administration, not between faculty and administrative staff, who after all are not really driving the bus of college governance either. Nonetheless, it is easy to see how two distinct processes become entangled here. There is certainly nothing inherently democratic about the anti-market ethos, and indeed the traditional academic order is very hierarchical and full of class privilege. Corporatization is not the only transforming ideology that could bring about social democratization at the college, but corporatization in this form does have some

democratizing effects, among other effects. The same rhetorical project that now undermines faculty's elite status position within the college hierarchy simultaneously undermines the ideological grounding of their special role in college governance; the transformation of education into a service does equalize the roles of different employees at the same time that it limits the scope of college's social vision.

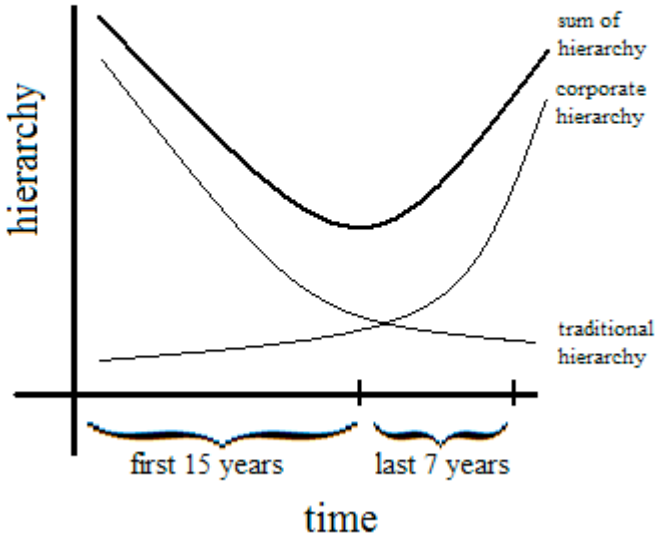
Pseudonym College is in a moment of transition, then—on an ambiguous, and to many eyes troubling, trajectory of corporatization. Faculty members are by no means the only ones ambivalent about the process. One exempt staff member, who described Pseudonym to me as "a very class-ish society," went on to say,

> —Employee groups are fairly distinct and obvious, administrators versus support staff versus faculty versus senior staff, say. I'd call them a separate employee group.
>
> *AB: And have you had the sense that that [the class-ish-ness of Pseudonym College society] has gotten more or less so over the time you've been here, or has it been about constant?*
> —Um, I think it has—if I were to map a trend it would have been kind of decreasing for probably fifteen years, and I would say increasing over the last seven years I've been here.
> *AB: What do you think has caused that change?*
> —I think we're getting very business-oriented. We're actually—it's maybe inevitable in the world today, but we're acting more like a business and less like a community, I think, than we used to.

It is interesting that this staff member cites corporatization as a marker of more, not less, hierarchy—conceiving of business in opposition to community. Many staff members, even though they celebrated recent advances in the flattening-out of hierarchy, also said one of the best things about the college was the way its climate differed from the corporate world—that the college was more interesting, more principled, and more humane. What is particularly fascinating about this staff member's account is the way the trend of democratization hits a turning point and then begins to erode again,

suggesting that perhaps two distinct processes were at work. Administrators, when speaking to me of change in the institution, tended to elide the breaking down of old hierarchies with the new rhetoric of service-orientation in one smooth verbal gesture, as though corporatization and democratization were one and the same process.

FIGURE 1:
Combined effect of decreasing traditional hierarchy and increasing corporate hierarchy



For purposes of conceptualization, consider the graph shown in Figure 1, which represents my interpretation of this staff member's account. Of course, the actual experience of hierarchy is more complicated than could be represented in one variable, but this rough sketch shows how two distinct and contrary transformations might sum to produce the effect of first decreasing, then re-increasing hierarchy that the staff member describes. Interview participants seemed fairly unanimous in their assessment that one trend in recent years has been a lessening of the entrenched hierarchy of the traditional order, which privileged faculty and academic work over staff and non-academic work, and which confined workers' involvement in governance to participation in powerless committees. They seemed less unanimous in their perceptions of what effects corporatization has on the institution. I read this staff member's account as suggesting that the incursion of corporate values is not simply a force for democratization—rather, it is replacing this diminishing hierarchy with a growing

hierarchy of its own. As Freeman cautions, "To speak out against free-market forces in public universities is not synonymous with embracing nostalgia for the university of yesterday," which was none too democratic—but neither is dismantling the exclusive old-boy networks of tradional academia necessarily synonymous with embracing the new corporate ethos in education. (254)

This staff member was not the only one to reveal concerns about potentially harmful effects of the college's transition to a more business-minded model. Several people told me about a retreat the previous spring—it seems that both Staff Council and one of the students who had been involved in PCFLC were involved in organizing the event—where the assembled group, mostly composed of staff members, reviewed progress forward and what remained to be done. They then compiled a report and took it to meetings with senior administration. The account I heard from various sources was that Joe Newpresident responded favorably to many points in their report—saying, indeed, that much of it was changes they could have made on their own without even consulting him—but that he immediately turned down their request to change the administrative structure so that the head of Human Resources, rather than reporting to the Business Office, would report directly to the president.

The first time someone told me about this, I did not understand what that proposal was about—it seemed bewilderingly esoteric in its focus on the details of hierarchy among senior administrators. I assumed, I think, that the interests of all senior administrators were more or less unified—and I was unfamiliar with the Business Office/Human Resources distinction, since Swarthmore's administration is structured somewhat differently. It became clearer, though, as I heard people speak more about

these two offices and noticed that many people spoke of the Director of Human Resources as, to some extent, an ally. One representative comment was this wary remark by an exempt staff member, after describing how a change in college retirement policy was causing confusion and apprehension among some categories of employees:

> —Interesting thing about that particular program is that the research and interest in it was all inspired by the Business Office. It was financially driven. It wasn't driven by HR.
> *AB: Hm. That is interesting.*
> —It mostly solves a Business Office problem, so that's the reason why, but.

This conception of Business Office problems, as opposed to Human Resources problems, reflects what seemed to be a general understanding that Human Resources is more concerned with people and the Business Office is more concerned with the bottom line. Everyone seems to prefer Human Resources. There is, then, a general ambivalence around the layers of meaning of corporatization at Pseudonym.

For living wage campaigners, all this entanglement may mean that it is impossible effectively to agitate for compensation principles opposing the logic of the marketplace without simultaneously engaging the question of democracy in the workplace. Faced with the processes of corporatization, the onus may fall onto living wage activists to develop alternative ideologies, to find strategies for making spaces that are simultaneously democratic *and* anti-market.