Wannabe University: Inside the Corporate University by, Gaye Tuchman, (University of Chicago Press, 2009), 272 pp., $25.00

Wannabe University is an unnamed public university which stands as a model for the expression of new managerialism in U.S. higher education. Sociologist Gaye Tuchmans's volume is structured as a detailed case study of the impact of corporate thinking and management on the American academy, a process of fundamental change which has taken place over the past two decades. She argues that complicit academics have surrendered authority to administrators and facilitated the transformation of higher education into an entity devoted to the market ethos, an unrelenting culture of audit, and the decentering or deskilling of the professoriate. The book is frequently an amusing and fun read. It is a hybrid form – partially a case study of one institution undergoing change, partially a lamentation by a bemused faculty member who appreciates satirical campus novels (e.g., Richard Russo, David Lodge) and also a sociological study of a corporatizing university. Since Tuchman has worked for a number of years at the University of Connecticut, many commentators have argued that it is a thinly veiled portrayal of U Conn/Wan U since 2000.

The power of the book rests in its fine detail about the people and processes portrayed. Tuchman demonstrates academics' adaptation to changing rules of status by describing how the value of a campus staff member is measured by the quality of food and drink at an institutional reception. She registers classic bureaucratic resistance through a department chair who asks, "Provosts come and go. Each brings his own policies…*How long do you think we can put off doing what this [provost] wants us to do?"* Like other wannabes, Wan U administrators are revealed as obsessed with improving the institution's performance on *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, and endlessly proclaiming their improvement and excellence. Post 2000 Wan U managers rediscovered undergraduate education which led to an expanded central administration's involvement in teaching and learning, primarily by constructing a BUE, Building for Undergraduate Education to house the retooled Honors Program, the First Year Experience Program, the Institute for Student Success, and the enhanced Institute for Teaching and Learning. Centralizing control over teaching also included shifting the Writing Center from the English Department to the ITL as well as relocating support for classroom audio-visual facilities there. As Tuchman describes it, Wan U 's BUE became a site bustling with middle managers jockeying to expand their influence and using interdisciplinary courses, the curriculum committee and ultimately the Task Force on Assessment as their preferred weapons.

Tuchman captures the methods and goals of institutional change in the corporatized university: conformity at all levels and in all ways. Therein rests the humor and irony that anyone attached to academe easily recognizes. Change is the commodity. It is not innovative or creative; rather, it is keeping up with the

Joneses. It is standardization or what the sociologist George Ritzer identified in the 1990s as McDonaldization. These processes of institutional change and acquiescence to the culture of conformity, have not unfolded seamlessly, but have been achieved amidst ample conflict between administrators and faculty members, between administrations and faculty governance bodies, and between administrations and boards of trustees who battled academics and university unions. During the post millennial period described, much of what Tuchman details is what she calls imposing an "accountability regime" on faculty. This section on the ubiquity of accountability would have benefitted from using the powerful analyses of critics like Joyce Canaan on UK higher education changes and Bronwyn Davies on the corporatization of Australian education. The higher education sector of both nations is much further along in the neoliberal corporatizing process.

While she is remarkably even handed, eschewing application of far deeper critiques of the neoliberal transformation of higher education by US critics like Henry Giroux, Cary Nelson, Marc Bousquet, Jennifer Washburn, John F. Welsh, etc., Tuchman reduces to quite tame terms the scathing analyses by highly regarded critics of UK higher education such as Mary Evans. Preferring to focus on her one institution, Wan U as the paradigm, she does not utilize Evans's critique to project the outcome and situate the still evolving corporate culture of entrepreneurship, competition and audit in the USA that higher education authorities employed to turn UK universities into neoliberal, marketized institutions.

What I hoped to read was a deeper analysis of the impact of institutional change on the structurally marginalized in Wannabe U, e.g., women and gender studies, ethnic studies, and diversity programs. The brief (five pages) description of the effects of redefined diversity goals and a culture of proclamations (corporate boastfulness according to Prof Richard Johnson) about excellence, inclusiveness, internationalization and diversity on such programs and groups at Wan U is insufficient. The impact is clear and sinister; however, Tuchman asserts that leaving out "diversity" from Wannabe's 2006 revised mission statement was unintentional. She notes it was added later when faculty and staff objected. However, this claim ignores the "error" as a reflection of the priorities of institutional change. "Diversity" at Wan U was redefined and deviated from the earlier goals of affirmative action, equal opportunity, inclusion of historically underrepresented minorities, and multiculturalism. The millenial goal of Wan U was to be a "diverse community where the highest moral and ethical values will prevail with a dual purpose, an inward focus on learning and an outward focus on service." This new "diverse community" as a goal carries whatever meaning one chooses; primarily, diversity has evolved into a commodity a student purchases with her/his tuition, a result that is unsurprising since Tuchman details how despite the "goal" of a diverse community, few faculty, staff and trustees are women or members of

minoritized groups. To those of us toiling in the trenches of the marginalized, this is all too familiar.

By the book's end Tuchman makes clear she believes the battle has been lost. The University of the 1960s and 1970s is being forgotten with the retirement of the generation that holds the institutional memory of what once was. Younger academics do not know that decisions were once reached democratically by departments and faculty senates, rather than imposed by central administrations. They are socialized to not say what they think and to fear honesty will derail their climbing the edu-corporate ladder. They are unfamiliar with the university's past, with a practice of speaking one's mind which once made the university a desirable alternative to a corporate career. That is what makes this message the saddest of all in Tuchman's quite illuminating volume**.** Rather than accepting defeat, I wish Tuchman would have pointed out the spaces and places where resistance might prove effective. If the newest faculty lack a historical view, then perhaps it is time to revive "teach-ins!" and other strategies to counter neoliberal hegemony.

Kathleen O'Mara
Professor of Africana & Latino Studies / History
SUNY College at Oneonta