

John A. Goldsmith, John Komlos, and Penny Schine Gold. *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career – A Portable Mentor for Scholars from Graduate School through Tenure*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 2001.

Reviewed by:  
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Three senior faculty prepared, *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career*, to share ideas and suggestions about the complex and rewarding world of academics. These professors, with over 75 years of humanities and social sciences academic experiences, discuss, in question and answer format, their perspective of academic life starting with entering graduate school, completing the dissertation, finding a mentor, getting a job, and obtaining tenure. An open and honest discussion of things you always wanted to know about the academy and somethings you didn't want to know but needed to know are highlighted. The text is an interesting guide that helps navigate a journey in the academy.

The text is divided into two sections – part one, “Becoming a Scholar,” and part two, “The Academic Profession.” The first section walks the reader through an academic career path. Topics such as deciding on an academic career, entering graduate school, identifying mentors, writing the dissertation, and landing an academic position are discussed. Issues, like work hours, are presented highlighting the pros such as flexibility and the cons such as, “But virtually all other waking hours were spent working.” This level of honesty and directness about academic life is refreshing and helpful.

The chapter on entering graduate school could be beneficial to perspective graduate students as well as faculty and administrators who work to recruit and retain graduate students. It was interesting to read how these three scholars viewed their roles in working with graduate students as different than working with undergraduate students. Yet, a number of faculty in our field teach both in graduate and undergraduate programs, at the same time. There was no discussion of this topic and how it may impact faculty workloads and levels of scholarship. The chapter on writing a dissertation would be one to recommend for doctoral students entering that phase of their educational process. The insight is sound and would be most useful in preparing for and completing their dissertation. These would provide excellent reading and discussion in a doctoral seminar prior to writing the dissertation.

Part two, the Academic Profession, is most appropriate reading and discussion for assistant professors, department chairs, and members of promotion and tenure committees. It is also a chapter that could be read and reread during the probationary period. Administrators would also find part two useful as they design environments to foster the growth and development of faculty.

Chapters 6 and 7 provide sound information on teaching, research, and service. Several areas, that could be considered in the future, that are not in the current text

include: various forms of distant education; institutions that use Ernest Boyer's model of scholarship reconsidered as part of the tenure and promotion process; the role of faculty in recruitment and retention of students; and the role faculty play in achievement of shared departmental and college goals. These are topics that institutions of higher education are discussing today and the role faculty play will have implications to their future careers.

A couple of illustrations of the changing roles of faculty are that they maybe expected to develop a web-based class or teach in an off-campus clinical setting like a public school, hospital, or community agency. Additionally, little attention was given to the role of new faculty in preparing for accreditation, or defining student learning outcomes, or increasing student enrollment in competitive markets. These topics maybe more relevant to faculty in professional schools rather than in the liberal arts or social sciences. Nonetheless, it appears these issues may challenge faculty currently and in the future. What are the expectations of faculty in light of these new challenges?

*The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career* concludes with a chapter on the personal side of academic life and then a summary chapter. Many individuals have glamorized the role of the professor. Goldsmith, Komlos, and Gold present frank views of this unique career. Goldsmith summarizes, "So my final observation is this: there is a higher calling beyond one's personal success than an academic career entails. Research and teaching involve an effort to attain something that goes beyond the conventions of our contemporaries." Personally, this summary fits well with me. An academic career is an opportunity and a challenge. I hope many will continue to answer the call. The expectations of an academic career may change and a new *Chicago Guide* will need to be prepared to help future scholars. At this time, the text is a welcome addition to the literature related to academic life.

I enjoyed *The Chicago Guide to Your Academic Career* and believe it can serve as a very useful guide to those considering an academic career and those who are beginning their faculty careers in higher education. The text could serve as a tool to foster discussion and support for those seeking tenure. Faculty will need to continue to determine their roles and responsibilities in changing times and environments. This text provides a good starting place.