BOOK REVIEW

Mid-Career Faculty: Trends, Barriers, and Possibilities

Anita G. Welch, Jocelyn Bolin, and Daniel Reardon, editors
Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill Publishers, 2019 (225 pages, ISBN 978-90-04-40816-6, $54.00)

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After the editors' introduction sets out the framework for the book, Part 1 begins with a summative review of the literature on the current state of mid-career faculty. The next three chapters take an in-depth look at significant barriers and challenges for mid-career faculty. Specifically, DeFillipo and Dee discuss the concept of faculty vitality and how it can be sustained both individually and institutionally (chapter 2). Rockinson-Szapkiw then addresses the challenges facing academic mothers at mid-career (chapter 3). In a similar manner, Graham and McGarry focus on barriers diaspora women encounter at this stage in their academic careers (chapter 4). Each chapter suitably blends the authors' experiences with supporting research to clearly demonstrate the concerns.

In Part 2, faculty from various universities share how they have successfully supported mid-career faculty. Donals shares how the University of Wisconsin-Madison piloted a program making time to support faculty mentoring (chapter 5). Buch, Dulin, and Huet explain their involvement in a comprehensive program at University of North Carolina Charlotte that enabled mid-career faculty to improve success in a six-step career planning process (chapter 6). Plummer, Pavalko, Alexander, and McLeod describe the establishment of faculty writing groups over a five-year period at Indiana University that increased support, community, accountability, and thus academic promotion for faculty at various career stages (chapter 7). Along with Bhardwaj, Hahs-Vaughn, and Scott, Hernandez describes how a faculty mentoring program provided meaningful guidance for her career at University of Central Florida, and they examine other institution-wide strategies UCF uses to assist mid-career faculty (chapter 8). In chapter 9, Rispoli provides additional research on the various forms of career mentorship, and analyzes their strengths and weaknesses.

The narratives in Part 2 describe the impact of strategies implemented to counter the challenges mid-career faculty face that were outlined in Part 1. Mid-career faculty and administrators will find the examples easy to replicate and modify for their particular contexts. Chapter 10 by Cavazos-Vela, Morales, Vela, and Fisk, seems to be identifying strategies for administrators to help mid-career faculty, but just repeats the content of the previous chapters. Thus, the conclusion by Reardon seems redundant.

While *Mid-Career Faculty* would be beneficial to faculty and administrators alike in addressing mid-career challenges, chapters 5 through 9 contain all the content and issues of the other chapters and provide practical solutions, while the remaining chapters are preamble and review. In addition, there are some awkward spelling and grammar errors, especially in the opening chapters, which are disappointing.

A mid-career faculty person would find this book helpful, although the primary audience is the academic administrator seeking to encourage and support mid-career faculty. The strategies identified in Part 2 are feasible, practical, and do not take extensive additional funds to enact. Certainly, each described university developed their programs over a period of years, yet the principles can be readily transferred to other contexts. For those serving as department chairs, academic deans, or other administrative roles in teaching theology or religious studies, these suggestions would be beneficial.