

9-2009

# Our University - Work and Job

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## Recommended Citation

Wendler, Walter V., "Our University - Work and Job" (2009). *Higher Education Policy Commentary*. Paper 23.  
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## Our University - Work and Job

***Warning - There is a three-letter word below that might be offensive – a slang word used to describe a persons rear end - but sometimes you just have to call it what it is.***

I reflected recently on the difference between work and a job. The worker sees something that needs to be done and pursues it because it advances the organization. The holder of the job sees something that needs to be done, and may or may not do it based on whether or not it is his or her job. The essential difference between these two people is simply that a worker improves the organization and the holder of a job covers his (here it comes!) ass.

CYA is job one.

It gets tiresome to talk with the holders of jobs. They are always worried about whether they are doing something they should be doing or something they are not paid to do, or is not their responsibility to do, or the union does not allow based on work rules, or, most painfully, that is “not my job”. All good reasons not to do something, all good excuses to watch an organization be less than it can be.

CYA defines the job.

Going to work in the morning entails being excited about helping make something bigger than yourself, better. Going to a job in the morning entails making sure you do nothing that in any way will have an impact on not being able to go to work the next day, that no one will scold you for not doing what you are supposed to do or taking on responsibility that is none of your business.

CYA is the work itself.

There is a ditch on both sides of this road. Everyone doing what everyone thinks best leads to a form of anarchy and disorder. However, everyone doing only what they are supposed to do regardless of its impact on the organization leads to something equal to anarchy in destructive force but follows the rules laid out in contracts, working papers, operating papers and other documents to a tee. It is the hardening of bureaucracy to the point where its primary role is to perpetuate itself and, in the end, cannot identify the work even though every job is well known.

CYA and nothing else.

The only places in the world where getting the work done is to define people's jobs are in placement offices, head-hunting firms, and human resource operations. I am not sure what a human resource is, but I think it has something

to do with jobs mostly, and very little of it is directed towards work. The work comes from somewhere else, some combination of head and heart that provides something people are willing to buy.

A combination of passion and dedication allows risks to be taken. A combination of reward and satisfaction brings out the best in a place of enterprise; I don't care whether it's a grocery store, bank, car dealership, church, big box retailer, or a mom-and-pop tomato stand.

No CYA here.

People who know the difference between job and work are found at successful organizations no matter their purpose, size, or supposed significance. People complain about Wal-Mart but when I go there, I get the feeling that employees are at work, not at a job. How is that possible? The news tells us they are under-paid, have modest or no benefits, and generally are not well treated. How can they appear to go to work and not a job? There is something going on that I can't understand but suggest that any organization having workers rather than job holders will eventually be very good.

No CYA here either.

Organizations that can't distinguish between job and work will founder and fold.

Our University has real work to do, and I am thankful that I am around many people who know what the real work is.

I am not going to tell you.

It is as Joe Louis said when asked what it took to be a great boxer: "If you have to ask, you will never know."