

## **Advancing Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure: A Roadmap and Call for Reform**

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Despite the precipitous increase of non-tenure track faculty appointments, promotion and tenure continues to operate as a central “motivational and cultural force in the academic lives” of many faculty (O'Meara, 2011a, p. 162). As a part of larger reward systems, promotion and tenure reflects institutional values, aspirations, privileges and power structures. Virtually every campus enacting serious change with regard to curriculum, technology, globalization, learning, or retention, must also face the implications for promotion and tenure. Faculty want to and should be recognized and rewarded for their efforts and many express frustration that promotion and tenure systems have not caught up with institutional priorities, changes in the dynamic nature of scholarship, or the aspirations of the emerging guard of academic citizens (Eatman, 2012). It often escapes those who complain, however, that the power to change promotion and tenure policy rests to a great degree with the faculty.

In 2010 we began collaborating with campus teams interested in reforming promotion and tenure guidelines at their institutions to define, assess, document, and reward engaged scholarship. Our organizing vehicle has been a full-day Faculty Rewards Institute at the annual Eastern Region Campus Compact Conference. To date we have hosted 41 campus teams including 116 individual participants. We designed this experience as a “knowledge- and tool-sharing network” (Bryk, Gomez & Grunow, 2010), and as a way to enhance collective “critical agency” (Kiyama, Lee & Rhoads, 2012) around campus reform in faculty roles and rewards, with particular attention to how current promotion and tenure policies maintain language and guidelines that can exclude diverse scholarship and diverse faculty (O'Meara, 2014; Sturm, Eatman, Saltmarsh & Bush, 2011).

The purpose of this article is three-fold. First, we share the process we are using to engage campus teams and individuals in diagnosing what is wrong within the promotion and tenure system, what they want to change, and how to make that change. Second, we share a template for studying and reforming promotion and tenure policies to better reward engaged scholarship. This template includes examples of policy language that illustrates each area for reform. Third, we offer an invitation to campus leaders working on these issues to join our knowledge-sharing network by contributing revised guidelines to a new Promotion and Tenure Policy reform repository hosted by New Jersey Campus Compact.

### **Our Process: Knowledge and Tool-Sharing, Peer Networks, and Critical Agency**

Social network analysis has shown that “relationships within a system matter to enacting change” (Daly, 2010, p. 2). We have found this most true in our efforts to support promotion and tenure reform. In the next section of this article we provide policy language examples that could be used by any campus team whether or not they participate in our Faculty Rewards Institute. For the purposes of this article, we have limited the number of examples, however the authors are glad to provide more upon request. The policies themselves offer a concrete form of

knowledge-sharing; however, we found greater value added. Campus teams gathered physically together for work facilitated a deeper level of knowledge-sharing and critical agency.

Campus teams applied and were selected to participate in the Faculty Reward Institute. The ideal team composition included faculty and administrators, often at the request of a dean or provost who was interested in working with them to initiate promotion and tenure reform. In some cases the team was focused on department promotion and tenure guidelines, and in others, college or university policies. In some cases individuals were sent by a campus to explore options for revision of faculty roles and rewards. Before the institute we gathered information from each team or individual regarding the kinds of reform they were most interested in. We came together and provided each of these campus teams with an overview of the key challenges engaged scholars face, and how engaged scholarship fits in the larger landscape of higher education policy reform (i.e. funding agencies, graduate education, and reform in promotion and tenure). This overview was informed by research we have conducted, as well as visits we have made over the last decade to at least 200 institutions providing support for engaged scholars and efforts to reform promotion and tenure policy.

Perhaps not surprisingly we have come to understand revisions to promotion and tenure processes as part of a larger effort toward inclusive excellence within colleges and universities. That is, we understand ways in which organizing practices, such as promotion and tenure, serve to privilege some groups and exclude others. For example, when engaged scholars are told they can only publish in certain disciplinary journals and those journals do not publish engaged work, a form of structural inequality has been set up disadvantaging those scholars. Sturm's (2006) work on the architecture of inclusion reminds us that institutional mindfulness is needed to identify and address these kinds of inequalities.

Although the focus of our efforts in this institute has been engaged scholarship and promotion and tenure, there are other efforts underway, which the three of us have also been involved in to improve organizing practices (including promotion and tenure and others) in access and opportunity for women and academic parents, faculty of color, faculty involved in interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and engaged scholarship, and for contingent and professional track faculty. In others words, efforts to improve promotion and tenure for engaged scholars improves work environments for all in many ways, and such reform is intimately connected to other efforts to regard diverse scholarship, and diverse scholars.

Evaluations from the institute suggest that participants leave with a larger sense of their posture in the movement of individuals pushing for more sophisticated approaches to the knowledge making enterprises of higher education. This underscores the importance of the aforementioned relationship dynamic as a key ingredient in change. The institute provided a space that in many cases was not available on their campus to build on their strategic work.

### **A Template for Regarding Community Engaged Scholarship**

We believe that any campus wishing to ameliorate promotion and tenure to honor engaged scholarship should consider changes in at least 5 categories:

1. Valuing, Defining, Describing and Differentiating CES
2. Criteria for Evaluating CES

3. Documentation/Evidence
4. Peer Review
5. Impact

We have developed a template as a checklist for getting started.

### *Valuing, Defining, Describing and Differentiating CES*

The first order of business for campuses that want to more appropriately regard community engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure policies is to affirm that the campus values engaged scholarship as part of their core mission. Following that affirmation it is important to articulate the place engaged scholarship takes in the orbit of faculty work. Such language should answer the question: What is engaged scholarship, how is it different than traditional scholarship or community service? Why is it a part of what this campus values and rewards among its faculty? The following excerpt shows how the University of Memphis answers these questions while aligning closely with mission:

#### **University of Memphis**

Scholarship can be divided into five sub-categories: application, creative activity, inquiry, integration, and the scholarship of teaching. Engaged scholarship now subsumes the scholarship of application. It adds to existing knowledge in the process of applying intellectual expertise to collaborative problem-solving with urban, regional, state, national and/or global communities and results in a written work shared with others in the discipline or field of study. Engaged scholarship conceptualizes "community groups" as all those outside of academia and requires shared authority at all stages of the research process from defining the research problem, choosing theoretical and methodological approaches, conducting the research, developing the final product(s), to participating in peer evaluation. Departments should refine the definition as appropriate for their disciplines and incorporate evaluation guidelines in departmental tenure and promotion criteria."

"The outreach or public service function of The University of Memphis is the University's outreach to the community and society at large, with major emphasis on the application of knowledge for the solution of problems with which society is confronted. Outreach primarily involves sharing professional expertise and should directly support the goals and mission of the University. A vital component of the University's mission, public service must be performed at the same high levels of quality that characterize teaching and research."

[http://www.memphis.edu/facres/pdfs/faculty\\_handbook\\_2007.pdf](http://www.memphis.edu/facres/pdfs/faculty_handbook_2007.pdf)

### *Criteria for Evaluating CES*

After firmly stating engaged scholarship is a priority, and addressing the issue of definition, it is prudent to consider the criteria that the campus will use to differentiate between engaged scholarship and community service, and the quality of the engaged scholarship. Many campuses have created some variation of Glassick et al's (1997) rubric for judging the quality and impact of community engaged scholarship (e.g. clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods,

significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique). Sometimes campuses focus on three key criteria by which engaged scholarship, as well as other forms of scholarship, will be evaluated: peer review, impact, and significance. Policies might then provide examples of how to apply each criterion. The following excerpt from UMB policy is instructive.

**Guidelines for College Faculty Personnel Reviews; College of Education and Human Development; University of Massachusetts, Boston**

“The measure of what is productive scholarship is that it is judged to be creative, rigorous, and valuable after being publicly scrutinized by professional peers. Evidence of scholarly work in almost every field will include written documents (articles, chapters, and books as well as evaluation reports, grant proposals, etc.) or other products (computer software, videos, etc.) that show:

- deep theoretical underpinnings relevant to the current state of the discipline and its related fields;
- rich conceptualization of some aspect of the field’s problems/issues/questions and of how particular areas of inquiry and activity might be relevant to addressing them;
- an approach to scholarly inquiry/applied scholarly activity that is well justified, coherent, and appropriate to the goals of such inquiry or activity;
- analysis, synthesis, model-building, or otherwise making sense of what is being learned for this endeavor;
- with whatever has been learned, some sense of its implications and what real difference it might make to the work that goes on in relevant settings.”

[http://cdn.umb.edu/images/college\\_education/GuidelinesforCollegeFacultyPersonnelReviews.doc](http://cdn.umb.edu/images/college_education/GuidelinesforCollegeFacultyPersonnelReviews.doc)

*Documentation/Evidence*

One of the major challenges that engaged scholars face is how and where to “publish” their scholarship. Not all community engaged scholarship results in peer-reviewed journal articles. This is similar to the challenges faced by many artists whose performances and exhibitions represent the manifestation of their major scholarly artifacts. As such, engaged scholars can benefit from policy language that notes diverse dissemination mechanisms—and that there are a range of acceptable scholarly products. In revised promotion and tenure guidelines potential products of engaged scholarship are named and valued such as: reports and studies, workshops, broadcasts, artistic and creative exhibits and performances, websites, and diagnostic services, technical reports, and site plans to name a few.

**University of North Carolina, Greensboro**

**Department of Peace and Conflict Studies**

**Guidance for Faculty: Tenure and Promotion**

“To be recommended for permanent tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, it is generally expected that a faculty member will have published a combination of eight articles, books, book chapters, knowledge building and dissemination websites, research monographs, and/or technical reports and non-academic reports resulting in implementation or meaningful impact on public policy. The reputation, quality, and impact of the publications are

paramount. As a rule, juried articles, books, and book chapters are weighted more heavily. But, other forms of knowledge building and dissemination can rise to the same level with contextualization. Review usually occurs in the sixth year of appointment. Early reviews for the granting of permanent tenure with promotion to Associate Professor are granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Department Chair and Dean. Previous publications may be considered with a reduced tenure clock and will be negotiated on a case-by-base basis. Because this is a field that builds strength from community engagement, collaboration, and multi-disciplinary work, jointly authored publications and presentations with other academics and external community leaders and partners are highly valued. Peace and conflict studies is multi-disciplinary; therefore, joint publications have equal value to solo publications. On joint publications, order of authorship is not weighted. Faculty may publish in peace and conflict studies journals, journals in related fields that are in line with the faculty member's area of study, and in multidisciplinary journals, which may reach a wider audience.

<http://hhs.uncg.edu/wordpress/cps/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2013/04/Peace-Studies-PT-Nov-2013-1.pdf>

### *Peer Review*

Another struggle faced by many engaged scholars is peer review. Often the best reviewers for program and project impact operate outside of the university; many are not faculty members. Campus teams should consider: Is the peer review process inclusive of community partners and faculty with expertise in CES? Campus reform in this area includes identifying potential reviewers and including both colleagues within the faculty member's field who do CES and community partner and public partners from outside academe. Policy language makes clear how such reviewers will be chosen, and what they can review and evaluate.

### **Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver Scholarship and Creative Activities**

"Internal evaluation of the quality and impact of the candidate's scholarship by the Appointments, Promotion and Tenure Committee is supplemented by letters and critical reviews from nationally recognized experts in the candidate's discipline, and, when appropriate, nationally recognized leaders in the field of the institutionalization of community engagement, service-learning, professional outreach and service. When appropriate, candidates may select reviewers from settings outside the academy. These Community Peer Reviewers may include educators, psychologists, and librarians working in public policy and other applied settings; key community partners who are not academics by training, but who are experienced consumers of applied research and use academic scholarship for policy or organizational ends.

Community Peer Review is appropriate to assess: 1) the effectiveness of collaborative research methods; 2) the impact of applied research on publics; and/or 3) the overall professional outreach and service to the community or organization. Such review should be

used as part of the overall review of candidates' work and in conjunction with traditional criteria and reviewers. While all of the above will be considered in evaluating scholarly activity, inevitably some additional evaluation will occur by the committee and by outside reviewers both as to type, amount, and quality of scholarly activity. The quantity and quality of research and creative activity ought to reflect clearly that the candidate has a recognized area of scholarly expertise that extends across academic, practice, and community settings and a pattern of focused interest, and should be in accordance with negotiated responsibilities."

[http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf\\_files/APT\\_policy\\_Final\\_May\\_18\\_2009.pdf](http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/APT_policy_Final_May_18_2009.pdf)

### *Impact*

The question of whether or not local community impact is accorded the same credibility as international, regional, and national impact is very important as it regards the issue of impact which is always a major factor in evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure. It is important for language in promotion and tenure guidelines that articulate the value of local partnership development and makes it clear that this impact is as important as international impact and at all ranks. Because funding sources are often considered in more research focused institutions and STEM disciplines, it is also helpful to note acceptance of multiple funding sources as evidence of the impact of the work. Otherwise, faculty may be disadvantaged for attracting more practice-oriented foundation grants rather than federal government research funds.

### **Auburn University**

Candidates must "Describe observed impacts and/or explain any unobserved impacts that are to be expected according to the discipline(s) applied. Identify the direct and indirect beneficiaries. Evidence of impact can include both quantitative results (e.g., changes in test scores, increased crop production, or widespread adoption of a product or technique) and qualitative results (e.g., testimonials from clients, reviews by knowledgeable scholars/critics)."

[http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/documents/2014\\_Award\\_for\\_Excellence\\_Faculty\\_Outreach\\_Nomination\\_Form.pdf](http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/documents/2014_Award_for_Excellence_Faculty_Outreach_Nomination_Form.pdf)

### **An Invitation**

The Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement now requires campuses to show evidence of reform in faculty roles and rewards to reward engaged scholarship to receive the engaged institution designation. This is an important national effort that represents much progress, and there are many campuses at some stage in the process of reconsidering faculty roles and rewards. However, several persisting weaknesses characterize the movement and pace of reform in faculty roles and rewards regarding community engaged scholarship (O'Meara, 2011b). Research has demonstrated that even those campuses that are arguably

among the most community engaged have not accomplished much more than definitional and valuing language in their guidelines (Saltmarsh et al, 2009, Saltmarsh et al, 2014). Most of these policies did not take on the issue of peer review, impact, documentation or new arrangements to support interdisciplinary and engaged scholars such as MOUs. There were few or no statements valuing diversity, recognizing unconscious bias known to exist in the evaluation of engaged scholarship and engaged scholars in the process of peer review (O'Meara, 2014). Also, there can be a cynicism among administrators and faculty about how hard it is to change the tenure system and whether it will really make a difference if they do—either because of the increasing number of faculty hired as non-tenure track faculty or because of the difficulty in assessing outcomes of promotion and tenure reform.

The latter point is in fact where we have fallen most short as a knowledge community. Unfortunately it has not been possible for us to track policy changes made by all participants post-Institute. Such information might help fuel the next generation of reform-minded colleagues, and help identify new strategies being employed such as MOUs, merit review criteria, portfolios, union negotiated contracts, and pathways for non-tenure track faculty.

We offer the following invitation to colleagues in the field. As part of the planning process for the October, 2015 Eastern Region Campus Compact meeting in Newark, New Jersey; New Jersey Campus Compact will manage a Promotion and Tenure Policy reform repository site. Participants can post links to publicly available documents, as well as the documents themselves that provide concrete examples of new ways of acknowledging engaged scholarship. The site also acts as a listserv by engaging participants in discussions and posting contributions to participants via email. Because we are interested in other areas of inclusion—you will also find a place to post policies pertaining to work-life policies, policies regarding valuing diversity work, policies rewarding interdisciplinary research, policies that remove noise and bias from external review, policies that acknowledge excellence in teaching, and policies that support full-time non-tenure track and contingent faculty. Each of these kinds of reforms take one step further in restructuring academic reward systems to be more inclusive of diverse faculty and diverse forms of scholarship.

The Promotion and Tenure policy repository is very simple. Participants are asked to post and share publicly available documents, rather than working documents under campus discussion. Anyone can join, and we want to include as many examples of revised guidelines as possible. Here is the link to the Promotion and Tenure Policy Repository and discussion board:  
[NJCC's Virtual HUB](#)

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