Faculty Evaluation Principles

Scholarly Activity Definition

We accept and employ the definition of scholarly activity that was first espoused by Boyer (1990) and then modified for the Land-Grant system by Weiser (1996). Scholarly activity is a creative work that is peer reviewed and publicly disseminated. There are several basic forms of scholarship, which are:

- Discovery of new knowledge;
- Development of new technologies, methods, materials, or uses; and
- Integration of knowledge leading to new understanding.

Excellence in teaching, research, and Extension (outreach) is achieved by committed faculty. Success involves creative, peer-validated discovery and the effective communication, development, and integration of new knowledge into relevant applications. We recognize that faculty activities - that are not scholarship in themselves - can involve creative, communicated, peer-validated intellectual work (scholarship) in any of its several forms (discovery, development, integration, and artistry). We also support the concept that peer validation and communication can occur in many ways including, but not limited to, peer-refereed publications.

Three essential items are needed to effectively evaluate a faculty member:

- An assessment of their performance of assigned duties;
- An assessment of their scholarly achievement; and
- An evaluation of their service activities.

We also acknowledge that some faculty positions are devoted primarily to conducting discipline-oriented research with a few additional assigned responsibilities, and that other faculty positions have extensive assigned duties (in areas such as teaching, advising, extension, or administration), with fewer opportunities for scholarly output. However, some scholarly activity is expected of all tenure-track faculty regardless of assigned duties. The following table depicts scholarly activities for each of the three missions of a Land-Grant University. (Adapted from Weiser 1996):

Category	Teaching	Research	Extension
Nature of the Scholarship	Develops and communicates new understanding and insights; develops and refines new teaching content and methods; fosters lifelong learning behavior.	Generates and communicates new knowledge and understanding; develops and refines methods.	Generates and communicates new knowledge and understanding; helps learners develop new skills; assists learners with changing current practices; works with learners to help them develop new aspirations.
Primary audiences for scholarship	Learners; educators; peers; the public.	Peers; other scientists, supporters of research; the public.	Extension agents, learners, other extension educators; peers; the public.
Primary means of communicating scholarship	Teaching materials and methods; curricula; web sites; publications and presentations to educator peers and the public.	Peer-reviewed publications and presentations; patents; public reports and presentations.	Peer-reviewed curricula, extension publications; web sites and web-based publications; periodicals and reports; peer-reviewed presentations and publications.
Primary criteria for validating scholarship	Originality and significance of new contributions to learning; depth, duration and usefulness of what is learned; lifelong benefits to learners and adoption by peers.	Originality, scope, and significance of new knowledge; applicability and benefits to society.	Impact; breadth, value, and persistence of use; attitudinal and management practice changes of learners.
How scholarship is documented	Teaching portfolio: summaries of primary new contributions, impacts on students and learning; acceptance and adoption by peers; evidence of leadership and team contributions.	Summaries of primary contributions, significance and impact in advancing knowledge, new methods, public benefits; communication and validation by peers; evidence of leadership and team contributions.	Summaries of primary contributions, communication to agents and learners, significance and scope of use and benefits; commercial and social value; acceptance and adoption of extension program; evidence of leadership and team contributions.

NOTES:

- Using this definition gives all three mission areas much-needed flexibility in accomplishing scholarly work.
- Web sites are by their nature publicly disseminated. Faculty wishing to receive credit for their web site as a scholarly activity should work with their unit leader to have their site peer reviewed. Units are encouraged to work with College administration to accomplish this.
- It cannot be stressed enough that assessment of faculty is an ongoing project that will continue to evolve over time. For example, note that a teaching portfolio concept is introduced in the table above. This can be a powerful tool in organizing and presenting the teaching excellence of a faculty member. There are significant efforts underway at Virginia Tech[1] . Stanford, MIT, Indiana University, and the University of Michigan are partnering on the Sakai[2] e-portfolio project. Teaching e-portfolios appear to be a nationwide trend.

[1]https://eportfolio.vt.edu/
[2]http://www.sakaiproject.org/