

RESOLUTION ON THE DEFINITION OF SCHOLARSHIP  
(#21-92/93-FA)

- WHEREAS, The Academic Senate of Humboldt State University has been asked to review the attached definition of scholarship prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarship; and
- WHEREAS, There already exists a list of examples of scholarship for RTP purposes which has been used; and
- WHEREAS, Each discipline has an understanding within itself as to what constitutes scholarship; and
- WHEREAS, There are no compelling advantages to adopting the Ad Hoc Committee's definition of scholarship; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED: That at this time the Academic Senate of Humboldt State University rejects the definition prepared by the Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarship and endorses the examples listed in Appendix J, Section VIII; B.2, of the Humboldt State University Faculty Handbook.

**DRAFT -- DEFINITION OF SCHOLARSHIP**

**HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY**

February 21, 1991

**Statement of Purpose**

The recent WASC accreditation report raises questions about the type of research that HSU wishes to encourage and the need for faculty development programs addressed to mid-career faculty. We agree that there needs to be a clarification about the type of research and creative activity which HSU wishes to encourage. It is our perception that we now have no common understanding of what constitutes scholarship. We use "scholarship" to encompass those things we have often included under the heading "research, scholarship and creative activities." The purpose of this definition is to bring greater clarity to that phrase. HSU needs to clarify its definition of scholarship because there are a number of areas in which recommendations and decisions are affected by our ambivalence and uncertainty. They include recruitment of faculty; retention, tenure and promotion judgements; post tenure review; and faculty development.

In defining scholarship, research and creative activity for Humboldt State University, we should recognize that rewarding and supporting these activities has risks as well as benefits. These risks have been identified by colleges and universities whose primary functions include research (Select Committee of the American Association of Colleges):

...[The faculty] should concern itself with the quality of college and university teaching, on which, after all, the effectiveness of any curriculum depends. In doing so it would have to confront the distorted reward system that makes research a more important factor than teaching or even service on the curriculum committee. The value system of the best and brightest products of research universities puts little emphasis on good teaching, counseling of students, and working with secondary schools and secondary school teachers. While this value system is most evident in the research universities, it permeates all of our four-year institutions, imported as part of the baggage that goes with the Ph. D. degree. Research, not teaching, pays off in enhanced reputation, respect of peers beyond one's own campus and access to funds. The language of the academy is revealing: professors speak of teaching loads and research opportunities, never the reverse.

In view of the undesirable consequences to which recognition and support of scholarship, research and creative opportunity have been observed to lead, it is particularly important to adapt

and consequently use a definition which is broad and which ties recognition and support to activities which are closely related to the instructional program. We should not repeat the error of other colleges and universities where the education of students has been damaged because of an overemphasis on narrowly-defined scholarship that causes faculty to shift their time and energy away from the classroom. We are very much aware that recent studies indicate that 70% of the professoriate in this country say that their primary interest lies in teaching and that 62% of them believe that teaching should be the primary concern in promotion, but that more than a quarter of them believe that there has been a shift away from teaching and service toward research.

Our intent in developing a definition of scholarship is to encourage the same qualities in our faculty that we attempt to foster in our students: a capacity for and a disposition towards disciplined examination of human experience. If we as a faculty do not display these qualities, then it is impossible to expect our students to learn from our example. In an article titled, "The Role of Scholarship in the Comprehensive University," the Academic Senate of The California State University states that:

"Scholarly activities by the faculty in a university are essential to every function required of them. The separation of scholarship from other faculty functions is an unrealistic and false approach to the university's obligations with respect to its constituencies....

"Self-directed learning is the most important "skill" that the faculty can transmit to students. It is therefore most important that the faculty engage in scholarly activity to maintain that skill in themselves, and to devise ways for their students to participate.

"Scholarly activity takes many forms ... The common element is the problem-solving in which new learning occurs, and the process may be more significant than the product to the faculty member as well as to students.

"It is the scholarly practice that most distinguishes the university professor from the pre-college and even the community college teacher. Similarly, the introduction to scholarly practice should be integral to the distinction between the baccalaureate candidate and the pre-college student.

"Non-doers cannot teach effectively for very long because they lose contemporaneity and spontaneity. All subject areas evolve, including the interpretational aspects of "old" knowledge. Thus the practice of one's subject must include some elements of discovery or synthesis, not

necessarily at the "cutting edge" but new enough to contribute to knowledge or insight as part of the generic change."

## **Principles**

Our definition of scholarship must be consistent with the goals and mission of the university, which identify instruction as primary, and it must be broad enough to encompass a diverse array of intellectual activities of the faculty (basic research, applied research, creative activities, consulting, and contributions to multidisciplinary approaches and pedagogical study) and of instructional programs.

With these principles in mind, we explicitly reject the view that either teaching alone or scholarship that does not contribute to instruction is appropriate at Humboldt State University. In place of this dichotomy, we must have a concept that encourages us to view the Humboldt State University professor as a teacher-scholar, one who thoughtfully explores the frontiers of his or her discipline, as well as established knowledge and theory. Such individuals bring innovative ideas and approaches to the classroom and serve the breadth of the curriculum in which they are engaged. The evaluation of teaching effectiveness cannot be divorced from this concept of the teacher-scholar.

## **The Definition of Scholarship**

We recognize that scholarship has four important attributes. It is disciplined, original, communicable, and subject to assessment or evaluation. A disciplined approach to experience is one in which the methods and assumptions of a field are used to bring insight to human experience. A disciplined approach has at least two applications in this context. The first is specific: a scholar is a practitioner in a particular discipline for which he or she is known, and from which he or she derives authority in the classroom and among his or her peers. The second is generic: a scholar recognizes his or her discipline as one way of thinking among many ways of thinking. A scholar tries to understand the connections between disciplines, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the various disciplines.

The concept of originality should be applied in its broadest meaning. A restricted application might mean that only work resulting in new knowledge would be considered true scholarship. A broad application would include original interpretation, original analysis, and original application of existing knowledge or art.

The communication of scholarship should be directed to at least two audiences. The primary one is the scholar's students, because their education is our primary mission. The second audience is the scholar's peers, because knowledge should be shared by and not perish with its creator. Peers include colleagues within and outside of the university. The communication of scholarship may take any of several forms that are characteristic of a discipline or of an instructional mode. The corollary of communication is evaluation. Scholarship should be assessed by members of its intended audience, either students or peers, as appropriate.

While it is clearly appropriate for faculty to be active in the pursuit of new knowledge in their disciplines, it is also essential that we recognize as a valued form of scholarship the investigations of methods to convey knowledge successfully to students. It is naive to think that successful pedagogical techniques are universal or static. Disciplines change in response to new knowledge, principles and techniques and as student populations and their background and preparation change. Pedagogical techniques that worked at the beginning of a teaching career may be ineffective later. Faculty should be encouraged and rewarded for scholarship that addresses the dynamic pedagogy of their disciplines. This type of exploration should lead naturally to cross fertilization between disciplines and to the appropriate use of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the curriculum. There is current interest, for example, in teaching critical thinking in all disciplines, teaching communication skills across the curriculum, adapting instruction to diverse cognitive styles, and in incorporating divergent cultural perspectives into the curriculum.

Keeping these distinctions in mind, we propose the following definition for the major component of professional performance at Humboldt State University:

The teacher-scholar shall engage in teaching and scholarship as an integrated professional commitment. Teaching shall consist of professional faculty-student interaction inside and outside of the classroom, including advising. Teaching shall contain elements of mutuality (exchange of knowledge, seeking answers to questions together) as well as unilateral transmission of knowledge and intellectual skills from professors to students. *Scholarship shall consist of any and all professional activities of the faculty that are disciplined, original, communicated to students and peers, and subject to evaluation.*

Our definition of scholarship assumes that it is an essential part of the functioning of an effective faculty member

at Humboldt State University. Scholarship is essential to faculty effectiveness in the classroom and to the maintenance of curriculum content and teaching methods that keep the university contemporary.

### **Examples of Scholarship**

We offer the following list of examples, which is meant as neither exhaustive nor in a sequence suggesting relative importance:

1. Publications and creative presentations, including criticism and review in journals, creative projects, books, texts or software. Some evidence of peer evaluation in this category could come from the selection process for the acceptance of the material for display or publication by editors or by jurors for juried exhibitions. Further peer evaluation should come from local faculty members who provide their own interpretation and judgment about the quality of the work produced.
2. Oral presentations at conferences, seminars, workshops, institutes and special programs, including those to departmental seminars on issues of common interest. Peer evaluation in this case should consist of comments from faculty and other knowledgeable experts on other campuses or in other parts of the country, as well as peer evaluations by local faculty members who are expert in the subject area.
3. Creative activities culminating in a professionally evaluated public display or performance. These creative productions could be evaluated by local experts, as well as by the individuals on other campuses who selected the activities for presentation. In some cases it might be desirable to institute a system of inviting experts from other campuses for those types of creative activities, such as theater productions, which are not easily transferable for presentation in another geographic area.
4. Studies of new approaches and directions in presenting course material and in investigating methods of dealing with diverse learning styles. Again, these presentations could appear in a variety of ways, but they also could be made available to other members of the campus or to other groups of individuals within the faculty member's department. A judgement of the quality of the work would be based upon peer evaluation.
5. Interdisciplinary approaches to learning or development of areas of study. Faculty who develop interdisciplinary approaches to general education areas or to new major instructional programs for the campus should be credited for

this scholarly activity to the extent that peer evaluation by departmental and university colleagues attest to the quality of the work that has been performed.

6. Consultantships and contracts. When these are related to the faculty member's area of expertise they should be given full consideration as scholarly activity. Certainly the judgements of the quality of the work performed would still necessitate evaluation by knowledgeable faculty and professional peers.

### **Implications for Campus Policies and Procedures**

We believe that there should be a minimum level of scholarly activity that is a condition for the continued employment of all probationary faculty and that higher levels of scholarly involvement must be required for tenure and advancement beyond the rank of assistant professor. Scholarship is more important than either of the other compensatory categories, and it is required for success in all personnel determinations, as is teaching. It is recognized that in the hands of a master teacher-scholar, teaching and scholarship are so intertwined as to defy separate evaluation. In contrast, publication, university service, and community service shall continue to be compensatory in combination.

**Final Note from the Ad Hoc Committee on Scholarship:**

Should our recommendations enjoy the support of the faculty and the administration, it will be necessary to modify the language of Appendix J, Sect. VIII(B)1-5. We do not presume to suggest new text at this time.

**Members:**

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