

Adapting *Scholarship Reconsidered* and *Scholarship Assessed* to Evaluate University of Wisconsin-Extension Outreach Faculty for Tenure and Promotion

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Abstract

A defining feature of American higher education at the end of the twentieth century has been the dialogue at and among universities about how to re-engage more productively with their local and regional communities. One component of that discussion is how to recognize and reward “the scholarship of engagement”—scholarly activity that is both grounded in the best current research and teaching and aimed at contributing to practical solutions to real problems. Just over a decade ago the University of Wisconsin–Extension embarked on a journey to address that dilemma. This article details how an institution can build on the core principles presented in Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) and Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff’s *Scholarship Assessed* (1997) to develop a robust definition of the scholarship of engagement and a rigorous model to assess it.

Introduction

A defining feature of American higher education at the end of the twentieth century has been the dialogue at and among universities about how to re-engage more productively with their local and regional communities. Finding new ways in the twenty-first century to bring their knowledge and resources to bear on society’s most pressing issues remains a central challenge for universities and their faculty. One component of that discussion is how to recognize and reward “the scholarship of engagement”—scholarly activity that is both grounded in the best current research and teaching and aimed at contributing to practical solutions to real problems. Just over a decade ago the University of Wisconsin–Extension embarked on a journey to address that dilemma. This article details how an institution can build on the core principles presented in Boyer’s *Scholarship Reconsidered* (1990) and Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff’s *Scholarship Assessed* (1997) to develop a robust definition of the scholarship of engagement and a rigorous model to assess it.

Ernest Boyer opened *Scholarship Reconsidered* with a challenge to emphasize the full range of scholarship (discovery, integration, application, and teaching) on a campus, and called on every college or university to find its own niche. The mission of the University of Wisconsin–Extension is to extend the knowledge and resources

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of the university to the people of the state—wherever they live and work. The UW-Extension faculty began this odyssey with a strong sense of what the institution’s mission was and how that mission influenced their consideration of scholarly work.

In Wisconsin, UW-Extension is organized as a statewide institution, equal in organizational stature to the fourteen

campus-based institutions in the system. Faculty who work on campuses, including those who engage in outreach scholarship, are governed by their campus promotion and tenure policies. Faculty employed by UW-Extension, referred to as non-campus faculty, are governed by the promotion and tenure policies that are the subject of this paper. UW-Extension has a diverse faculty numbering over three hundred organized in seven academic departments. The focus of this work is on those faculty engaged in outreach education through University of Wisconsin–Extension programs in county cooperative extension offices (community-based agriculture, natural resources, community development, family, and youth educators), a geological and natural history survey unit, labor education through a continuing education unit, and public broadcasting—all with a statewide mission.

UW-Extension faculty are primarily engaged in outreach education. Research, integration, and teaching are also integral to the institution, however. Therefore, a broad understanding of scholarship—one that encompasses a broader range of activities—was needed.

An expanded view of scholarly outreach has been a hallmark of the University of Wisconsin since its inception. In 1909, social critic Lincoln Steffens published his article “Sending a State to College” in the *American Magazine*. The article’s two subtitles were “The University That Reaches Anybody, Anytime, Anyhow” and “What the University of Wisconsin Is Doing for Its People.”

As these phrases connote, Steffens found in his day that Wisconsin epitomized the democratization of knowledge. He credited Charles Van Hise, president of the University of Wisconsin from 1903 to 1918, with extending the university to the people of the state, what would become known as the “Wisconsin Idea.” President Van Hise was the first to articulate a threefold function of the University of Wisconsin: research, teaching, and “activities to carry knowledge to the people.” In the closing paragraph of his article, Steffens characterizes the link between the university and the state in this way:

The University of Wisconsin is as close to the intelligent farmer as his pig pen or his tool house. The University laboratories are a part of the alert manufacturer’s plant. To the worker, the University is drawing nearer than the school around the corner and is as much his as his union is his. Creeping into . . . the opinions of voters with impersonal, expert knowledge, the State University is a part of the citizen’s own mind. (*Steffens 1909, 364*)

This dedication to a wider ideal in higher education has marked the history of the University of Wisconsin–Extension. It is the foundation on which the scholarly work of faculty members is built.

Defining the Scholarship of Engagement

A growing dissatisfaction with the existing tenure and promotion system emerged between 1990 and 1994 among the UW-Extension faculty. Two critical issues drove their concerns. First, there was a sense that the preparation of a tenure dossier, as required in the process at that time, was not aligned sufficiently with the “scholarly” attributes of a faculty member, but was more a mere cumulative accounting of *good community work*. It was also noted that the existing system did not make good use of the array of planning and reporting documents and other materials routinely developed by junior faculty during their initial years of employment.

UW-Extension faculty tenure and promotion guidelines in place at the time (prior to 1997) stated: “the granting of tenure is based on a consistent and high level of professional performance” (*UWEX Articles of Faculty Governance, Appendix II.A 1997*). Accomplishments were to be assessed based on non-weighted performance in the following categories: program leadership, teaching, research, publications, administration, and professional public service. The focus of this system of review for tenure and promotion was on

activity, with only a weak connection to the scholarly aspect of that educational work.

By 1995 a number of UW-Extension faculty had been exposed to the broader thinking about scholarship espoused by Ernest Lynton (*Lynton and Elman 1987; Lynton 1995*) and Ernest Boyer (*1990*) and their disciples. Enough interest was generated that two successive faculty task forces (1995 and 1997) recommended making changes to the tenure and promotion criteria and guidelines. The faculty senate adopted these recommendations in 1997 in the hope that the faculty's new approach to documenting scholarly work would better match the probationary faculty's developing portfolios. Im-

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portantly, the faculty also adopted a revised definition of scholarship. After reviewing other national efforts and internal discussion, the UW-Extension faculty determined that scholarship is: “creative intellectual work; reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value; added to our intellectual history through its communication; and valued by those for whom it was intended” (*UWEX Articles of Faculty Governance, Appendix I.B 2001*). As Table 1 illus-

trates, this definition compares favorably with, and in some aspects goes beyond, other contemporary definitions of scholarship.

Defining scholarship was the simple part. Since tenure-track faculty who had been hired under the old system were grandfathered under the previous policy, the application of this new definition and related standards was deferred for a number of years. However, as the cohort of tenure-track faculty members who would be judged by this new standard loomed on the horizon, the faculty leadership began in earnest to consider how to make tenure and promotion judgments using the new definition and standards in a fair and defensible manner. After years of reviewing faculty work under the previous guidelines and criteria, the faculty were not ready to apply new standards even to a new format of their own design and under the revised definition that they had devised. They made a start, however. In the section of the faculty's tenure and promotion policy documents devoted to assessment, they adopted

Table 1. Contemporary Definitions of Scholarship

UW-Extension	Oregon State University	Lee Schulman, Carnegie	Robert Diamond, Syracuse University
"creative, intellectual work"	"creative, intellectual work"		"high level of discipline-related expertise" . . . "breaks new ground, is innovative"
"reviewed by the scholar's peers who	"validated by peers"	"be open to critique and evaluation"	"can be peer reviewed"
"added to our intellectual history through its communication"	"communicated"	"be public" . . . "be in a form that others can build on"	"can be replicated or elaborated" . . . "can be documented"
"valued by those for whom is was intended"			"has significant results"

a matrix that detailed various forms of scholarship that had been developed by Oregon State University (Weiser and Houghlum 1998). The matrix was based in large measure on the Carnegie model of a contemporary and inclusive definition of scholarship articulated by Ernest Boyer. However, it did not suit members of the faculty who, under the old system, had developed a well-understood, albeit outmoded, standard for determining the merits of candidates for

tenure in UW-Extension. Therefore, in the summer of 1999 the UW-Extension faculty leadership and their staff embarked on a journey to affirm the definition of the scholarship of engagement and to develop a means of assessing the scholarly contributions of faculty for purposes of tenure and promotion that aligned with the new definition.

Assessing the Scholarship of Engagement

In *Scholarship Assessed* (1997), Charles Glassick, Mary Huber, and Gene Maeroff continued Boyer's work, addressing his challenge to develop standards to guide the documentation and evaluation of scholarly work. The authors assert that if faculty members are to be evaluated on scholarship, the rules must be clarified and understood. With an agreed upon definition in place, the UW-Extension faculty moved to address the challenge posed in *Scholarship Assessed*—that in order to recognize each form of scholarship (teaching, research, outreach, and integration) as legitimate, it must be evaluated by a set of standards that acknowledge what it contributes as a scholarly act. The faculty began looking at the standards established in *Scholarship Assessed*: clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique.

The standards to evaluate scholarship found in *Scholarship Assessed* are augmented with probing questions to use in assessing whether the standards have been met. For instance, the following questions are used to ascertain whether the scholar has based his or her work on clear goals: “Does the scholar state the basic purposes of his or her work clearly? Does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable? Does the scholar identify important questions in the field?”

Similar probing questions are found for each of the other standards in *Scholarship Assessed*. In order to use the standards of *Scholarship Assessed* as a basis for developing a unique assessment scheme, the elements of the extension-adopted definition were first cross-referenced with the most closely corresponding scholarship assessment elements as detailed in Table 2. The four parts of the UW-Extension definition are matched roughly with the six standards that Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff offer.

At this point in the process, UW-Extension possessed a robust, contemporary definition of scholarship, but lacked a widely agreed-upon understanding of how to assess whether an individual's work met the definition. The standards found in *Scholarship Assessed*,

Table 2. Scholarship Assessment Definition and Standards Cross-Reference

Elements of UW-Extension Scholarship Definition	Corresponding <i>Scholarship Assessed</i> Elements
“creative, intellectual work”	“clear goals” . . . “adequate preparation”
“reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value”	“appropriate methods” . . . “reflective critique”
“added to our intellectual history through its communication	“effective presentation”
“valued by those for whom it was intended”	“significant results”

and equally important, the questions that should be asked when probing the scholar’s work to determine its adequacy, offered UW-Extension faculty a basis on which to build its own assessment system. During a workshop on tenure and promotion, the faculty composed probing questions (à la *Scholarship Assessed*) that specifically pertained to the elements of the UW-Extension definition of scholarship. An ad hoc committee of the faculty senate was then charged with building on that initial work to develop a mechanism that could be used to guide the decision-making process when an assessment of scholarship was needed. Ideally, such a mechanism could be used by both those presenting and those evaluating faculty scholarly work in matters of tenure and promotion (as well as other faculty reviews). The ad hoc committee representing six of seven academic departments in UW-Extension drafted an assessment model specifically designed to address the institution’s unique needs.

The UW-Extension faculty developed their own set of questions related to each element of their definition of scholarship. When assessing creative intellectual work, for instance, they asked: “How does it build upon the knowledge, research, or practice in the field? How does the work respond to an identified need for new knowledge, a new approach, or a new method, or the creative adaptation of existing knowledge, approaches, or methods? How did the work result in the development of new information or the development

of new or creatively adapted methods or approaches?” Probing questions were developed for each of the four elements of the UW-Extension definition of scholarship. The standards and questions from *Scholarship Assessed* stimulated the faculty’s work and greatly influenced the resulting model.

The authors of *Scholarship Assessed* note the need for a climate of trust among faculty and administration and a common sense of purpose in order to implement meaningful standards. Building such a climate required multiple levels of involvement spread widely across the institution. In this case, the proposed assessment questions were reviewed (and subsequently revised and reviewed in multiple iterations) by department tenure and promotion committees, the institutional review committee, academic department chairs,

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the faculty at large, deans, the provost and the chancellor, the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, and the Senate as a whole.

The resulting model takes each element of the UW-Extension definition of scholarship and assesses the presence and adequacy of the scholarly work in response to that standard. Ultimately, the faculty adopted and the chancellor concurred

with the standards represented in Table 3 for assessing the scholarship of outreach produced by UW-Extension faculty for tenure and promotion (and other established reviews, including pre- and post-tenure reviews).

An important element of this model is that UW-Extension faculty have an expansive and rigorous definition of scholarship—one that could apply equally well to a college professor who teaches predominantly undergraduates in a traditional classroom; to the researcher who devotes most of her time to discovering new knowledge in a laboratory; or to the outreach scholar who engages in the application of her disciplinary knowledge to a consequential community need. The model is well suited for the assessment of the work of scholars who emphasize different aspects of scholarship. Boyer’s vision of the faculty as a “mosaic of talent” is satisfied by this model, as is his assertion of the need in all cases to apply universal mandates of scholarly rigor. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff supplied thorough

Table 3. Assessing Scholarly Work in UW-Extension

Element of UW-Extension Definition	Corresponding UW-Extension Assessment Questions
<p>“creative, intellectual work”</p>	<p>How does the work build upon the knowledge, research, or practice in the field?</p> <p>“How does the work respond to an identified need for new knowledge, a new approach, or a new method, or the creative adaptation of existing knowledge, approaches, or methods?”</p> <p>How did the work result in the development of new information or the development of new or creatively adapted methods or approaches?</p>
<p>“reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value”</p>	<p>How has the scholar’s work been shared in published articles, academic presentations, exhibitions of work, creative performances, or in other public venues in which peers independently evaluated this work?</p> <p>How has the scholar’s work resulted in the receiving of an award, honor, or some other public recognition by peers?</p> <p>How has the scholar’s work resulted in testimonials, letters of recommendation, or adaptations that affirm the value of this work?</p>
<p>“added to our intellectual history through its communication”</p>	<p>How has the work been shared with colleagues?</p> <p>How has the work added to the body of knowledge?</p> <p>Where is the work accessible?</p>
<p>“valued by those for whom it was intended”</p>	<p>What actions did the intended audience take as a result of this work?</p> <p>What measurable impacts occurred as a result of the effort (e.g., individual, family, community—knowledge gained, information shared, behavior changed)?</p> <p>How were the developed materials or processes subsequently used by others?</p> <p>What were the implications, either positive or negative, beyond those anticipated for the intended clientele and/or community?</p>

(UWEX Articles of Faculty Governance, Appendix I.B, 2001)

standards that, while modified to fit a different structure, are largely embraced in the UW-Extension model.

Lessons Learned

This model, shared with faculty in its many draft stages, has now been presented widely as an *approved* version. The emphasis of workshops conducted for faculty over the past year has been on increasing their understanding of the UW-Extension definition of scholarship and on their learning to apply the model when assessing it. Participants have engaged in exercises to help them see how their tenure portfolio can document the ways they have satisfied the mandate to engage in scholarly work. This has challenged scholars to consider how they approach their work. Do they simply decide at specific points in time to “do scholarship”? The findings from evaluations show that the workshops have been effective, that attitudes of the faculty concerning a rigorous definition and assessment of scholarship applied to outreach education are changing in positive ways, and that faculty view their work differently now (in scholarly terms) than prior to these changes. There is an emerging recognition that scholarship is an *approach* to doing work—that scholarship is an integral part of that work, rather than a discrete piece of it.

In describing the distinction between the scholarship of teaching and excellent teaching, Lee Shulman of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching says the former “requires a kind of ‘going meta’” (*Hutchings and Shulman 1999*). Shulman asserts that the “scholarship of teaching” is not synonymous with “excellent teaching.” He describes an approach “in which faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning—the conditions under which it occurs, what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth—and do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it” (*Hutchings and Shulman 1999, 13*). Such a rigorous approach applies equally well to the scholarship of engagement and to the scholarship of teaching. Shulman is talking about faculty taking a scholarly approach to their work, whether teaching, research, or outreach. In the paradigm of the

“The assessment questions are meant to guide a qualitative development of and review of a scholar’s work and are not to be used as a checklist.”

UW-Extension definition of scholarship, it means faculty must be creative, intellectual thinkers, have peers validate their work, add that work to the disciplinary knowledge base, and confirm that those for whom it is intended value it—this is the essence of scholarship and differentiates the scholarship of engagement from *good community work*.

In the process of defining and assessing the scholarship of engagement, UW-Extension has embraced the following fundamental concepts:

1. While scholarly work encompasses all four of the elements of the UW-Extension definition (creative, intellectual work; reviewed by the scholar's peers who affirm its value; added to our intellectual history through its communication; and valued by those for whom it was intended), not every one of the probing questions found in our assessment model needs to be addressed in order to meet the standard. The assessment questions are meant to guide a qualitative development of and review of a scholar's work and are not to be used as a checklist.
2. Scholarship may occur in various forms—research, teaching, integration, and engagement—and the work can be presented in many ways, such as exhibitions, papers, or performances.
3. Scholarly work may be collaborative, but an individual scholar's work contribution within the collaboration must be identified and must be subjected to assessment.
4. The definition and standards that UW-Extension employs should not be used exclusively for the promotion and tenure step, but rather are to be used for all faculty reviews, promotions, and rank changes.
5. Scholarship is an approach to the way faculty work is done. The authors of *Scholarship Assessed* state that the key to the commonalities of scholarship lies in the *process* of scholarship—in how faculty do scholarship.

Where are we now? In August 2001 and August 2002 faculty forums were held for tenure decision makers—department and institutional promotion and tenure committee members and mentors. The 2001 forum officially unveiled the affirmed definition and new assessment of scholarship and encouraged discussion on how to use them to evaluate tenure documents. The 2002 forum

refined our understanding of the application of the definition and assessment methodology so that tenured faculty, in turn, could work more effectively with probationary faculty and develop a more consistent application of this system across our academic disciplines. In addition to the forums, numerous department workshops have been devoted to working with probationary faculty and their mentors and promotion and tenure review committee members. An effort is under way to work with both probationary faculty and those who will be judging their candidacy for promotion and tenure to develop a more rigorous and regular way of learning about scholarship and the approach to doing scholarly work.

“[T]o be successful in effecting change one must build on the intellectual foundation of scholars that have gone before us.”

Unpublished evaluations involving 165 UW-Extension faculty participants in workshops, seminars, orientation sessions, or training programs devoted to the new definition and assessment of scholarship from the past three years show that good progress is being made. The vast majority of respondents have a better understanding of scholarship in an outreach context. The more exposure to this work, particularly in practice settings, the more confidence is expressed. Faculty report that they have learned to take a more scholarly approach to their community programming. They express a greater degree of confidence in documenting their scholarship. They also express an above average level of comfort in applying the standards to their own work. The faculty note that a key factor contributing to their understanding is the use of probing questions specific to each element of the definition of scholarship. Academic department leaders and mentors express an above average level of comfort reviewing peers using the assessment standards.

What has been learned is that to be successful in effecting change one must build on the intellectual foundation of scholars that have gone before us. One must strive for internal institutional consensus and understanding, but realize that not everyone will agree. These efforts take time—time to develop the definition, to establish standards, to raise general awareness about the issues, to nurture understanding about those issues, to develop skills and comfort levels when applying the definition, to assess scholarship, and to be open to continual reflection and renewal.

Charles Glassick and his peers offer a final, important standard—reflective critique, in which the scholar thinks about the work, seeks opinions of peers, and learns from the process so that scholarship itself can be improved. At the University of Wisconsin–Extension scholarship is seen as an evolving process. Internal reflection within the institution and sharing with others is expected and will contribute to better work on scholarship, and to the ultimate goal of a more demonstrably engaged institution.

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