

Editor's Corner: The Scholarship of Extension and Engagement: What Does It Mean in the Promotion

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Summary

A university dedicated to becoming an engaged institution must give academic rewards to faculty who participate in extension and engagement (E&E) activities. The reforms needed to adequately reward faculty for E&E activities will not occur unilaterally, but will require a collaborative effort among the faculty RPT candidates, extension administrators, and the RPT decision-makers. Faculty RPT candidates must document and submit their scholarly E&E accomplishments to review processes that are as rigorous, reliable, and consistent as the traditional review processes for scholarly research activities. Extension administrators must help identify, and if necessary create, procedures that provide appropriate reviews. Finally, RPT decision-makers must accept new yardsticks for measuring excellence in the different forms of scholarship.

Since the Kellogg Commission issued its report in 1999 on the engaged institution, universities have welcomed the concept of their faculty members working in partnership with outside constituencies. But, while universities are encouraging their faculties to become engaged with the community, faculty members are wondering how these efforts will be rewarded. Only two years before the Kellogg Commission's report, Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997, 8) noted that

Many colleges and universities have been loath to bestow academic rewards on faculty members who concentrate on applying knowledge instead of discovering it. Such resistance to an enlarged vision of faculty work limits the services that college and university faculty provide by means of outreach and extension activities.

We believe institutions of higher education that fail to recognize the need for good teaching and for engagement in society are falling out of step with the expectations of

parents, students, politicians, and the larger public, as well as with their own stated goals. Indeed, we hope that the voices now questioning the reward system will soon rise to a crescendo to argue for a better way of setting expectations for faculty.

As the concept of the engaged university gains prestige, will universities count extension and engagement (E&E) activities toward reappointment, promotion and tenure (RPT)? Or, will they treat E&E activities like service and administrative tasks and relegate them to full professors, non-tenure track faculty, and terminal associate professors? [1] It is noteworthy that many faculty members who are hired with extension appointments are frequently non-tenure track, and many who are on the tenure track do not attain the rank of full professor.

Promotion and tenure decisions, generally, are based upon the number of refereed journal publications, the number of competitive grant dollars, and the number of graduate students supported by the candidate's research. Using these rules of thumb, RPT becomes a numbers game, often valuing quantity over quality. Typical research activities are well suited to be judged by these criteria. Typical extension and engagement activities are not. Thus, faculty members who heed the call of their institutions to engage the community have little hope of being substantively rewarded until new yard sticks are found to measure the quality of extension and engagement activities.

Why do RPT decision-makers insist on using these rules of thumb? Perhaps because it is the way things have always been done. Perhaps because they are reluctant to acknowledge any scholarly activity other than the discovery of new knowledge. Perhaps because it is easy. The numbers game provides fairly reliable indicators of excellence to use in judging a candidate's credentials, particularly for people who have no expertise in the candidate's field of study. Because there are no universally recognized, established ways to measure excellence of other forms of scholarship, scholarly activities other than research are all too often ignored by RPT decision-makers because they have no easy way to judge the candidate's scholarship.

During the past several years, universities have struggled to define "the scholarship of extension and engagement." But, defining the activities that comprise this form of scholarship is only the first step. Until reliable yardsticks of excellence are identified, and accepted, RPT decision-makers will continue to "be loath to bestow academic rewards on faculty members who concentrate on applying knowledge instead of discovering it." (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff 1997, 8).

In the mid-nineties, NC State addressed the issue of evaluating E&E activities (called extension and outreach activities at that time). NC State adopted Regulation 05.20.8 to assist faculty members in reporting E&E activities on their annual activity reports and for purposes of RPT. Regulation 05.20.8 defines E&E activities, describes evidence of excellence, and identifies

mechanisms for evaluating E&E activities (NC State University 1994).[2] Unfortunately, few faculty members or administrators are familiar with this regulation, and thus, it has little impact on RPT decisions.

Even if RPT decision-makers were familiar with Regulation 05.20.8, it still may have little or no impact on RPT decisions because it falls short of providing reliable yardsticks of excellence. The burden of assessing excellence remains with the RPT decision-makers, many of whom, and perhaps all, may have little or no expertise in the candidate's field of study or with the scholarship of E&E. Understandably, they fall back on the old reliable numbers game because it provides an organized, formal assessment of a faculty member's scholarship by experts in the same field of study. Refereed journal articles and competitive grants have been evaluated by a panel of experts under controlled and consistent conditions. Thus, RPT decision-makers are comfortable judging an RPT candidate's dossier because others who are experts in the candidate's field of study have already made the difficult assessment of excellence.

Regulation 05.20.8 suggests two primary mechanisms for evaluating excellence of E&E activities, and while helpful, neither measures excellence with the same reliability or consistency of a refereed journal article or the award of a competitive grant.

- The systematic collection of information from clientele or audiences who have been impacted by the faculty members outreach and extension activities.
- External letters of evaluation solicited from academic peers and from clientele who have benefited from the faculty member's outreach and extension efforts.

The challenge to universities is to find mechanisms for evaluating E&E activities that provide the same reliability and consistency as the mechanisms for evaluating research activities.

This is not to suggest developing another set of criteria for judging the scholarship of extension and engagement. To do so runs the risk of creating (or perhaps reinforcing) a second class citizenship status for extension faculty. Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997, 23-24) noted "evaluation that uses different standards for research, teaching, and professional service has outlived its day. Academia needs a single standard, but it cannot implement that standard simply by applying to other forms of scholarship the traditional criteria that have usually been used for judging research." They developed six standards that can be used to evaluate all forms of scholarship.

- Clear goals
- Adequate preparation

- Appropriate methods
- Significant results
- Effective presentation
- Reflective critique

The Glassick standards were adopted by NC State as the standards by which to judge scholarship. Again, few faculty members or administrators are familiar with the Glassick standards or have a clear grasp of what they mean in the RPT process. Glassick and his colleagues identified these six standards as common elements in evaluating all forms of scholarship. A refereed journal article accepted for publication is likely to have been evaluated, consciously or unconsciously, using the Glassick standards. Likewise, competitive grants are awarded based upon proposals that follow these standards. The Glassick standards also easily lend themselves to evaluate E&E activities, such as program activity, relevance, and delivery.

Before the Glassick standards can have a meaningful impact on the RPT process for faculty members who engage in E&E activities, two goals must be achieved:

- Identification of reviewers and Review Boards with the expertise to evaluate E&E activities using the Glassick standards, and
- Acceptance by RPT decision-makers (senior faculty, department heads, deans, provosts, and chancellors) that the identified reviewers and Review Boards are reliable sources for evaluating an excellent extension and engagement program.

Significant steps have already been made to achieve the first goal. The National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement was created to review and evaluate the scholarship of engagement of faculty who are preparing for annual review or for promotion and tenure. On-line: <http://www.scholarshipofengagement.org>. The National Review Board uses a modified version of the Glassick standards to evaluate the scholarship of engagement. The complete text of the Glassick standards are set forth below, with the National Review Board's modifications shown in italics.

Glassick standards of scholarly work

Clear Goals

- Does the scholar state the basic purpose 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?
- *Is there an "academic fit" with the scholar's role, departmental/university mission?*

Adequate Preparation

- Does the scholar show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field?
- Does the scholar bring the necessary skills to his or her work?
- Does the scholar bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward?
- *Is the work intellectually compelling?*

Appropriate Methods

- Does the scholar use methods appropriate to the goals?
- Does the scholar apply effectively the methods selected?
- Does the scholar modify procedures in response to changing circumstances?
- *Does the scholar describe rationale for selection of methods in relation to context and issue?*

Significant Results

- Does the scholar achieve the goals?
- Does the scholar's work add consequentially to the field?
- Does the scholar's work open additional areas for further exploration?
- *Does the scholar's work achieve impact or change? Are those outcomes evaluated?*

Effective Presentation

- Does the scholar use a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work?
- Does the scholar use appropriate forums for communicating work to its intended audiences?
- Does the scholar present his or her message with clarity and integrity?
- *Does the scholar communicate/disseminate to multiple audiences?*

Reflective Critique

- Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work?
- Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique?
- Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?
- *Does the scholar synthesize information across previous criteria?*
- *Does the scholar learn and describe future directions?*

Few faculty members or administrators at NC State are familiar with the National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement. Educating faculty and administration about the Board's existence and taking advantage of its services, however, are exercises in futility if a university does not also achieve the second goal -- acceptance by RPT decision-makers that the identified reviewers and Review Boards are reliable sources for evaluating an excellent extension and engagement program. Recognition *and* acceptance of such evaluations are critical if a university is going to reward faculty members who engage in E&E activities. Recognition and acceptance must occur at all levels of the RPT process, from the departmental voting faculty to the chancellor.

The reforms needed to adequately reward faculty for E&E activities will not occur unilaterally, but will require a collaborative effort among the faculty RPT candidates, extension administrators, and the RPT decision-makers. Faculty RPT candidates must document and submit their scholarly E&E accomplishments to review processes that are as rigorous, reliable, and consistent as the traditional review processes for scholarly research activities.[3] Extension administrators must help identify, and if necessary create, procedures that provide appropriate

reviews. Finally, RPT decision-makers must accept new yardsticks for measuring excellence in the different forms of scholarship.

To become an "engaged institution," a university must give academic rewards to faculty who engage in E&E activities. To do so requires an adjustment of old attitudes, a new vision of scholarship, and a willingness to accept new yardsticks to measure excellence. A good university that rewards excellence in all of its stated missions, instead of just one, can become a great university.

Footnotes

1. The term "terminal associate professor" is used to describe a faculty member who has achieved tenure but who has no realistic expectation of promotion to full professor, for reasons such as taking on substantial administrative responsibilities, or engaging in E&E activities in a department where they are not valued.

2. Originally known as Appendix C in the Faculty Handbook, Regulation 05.20.8 describes the documentation related to outreach and extension that should be included in each faculty member's annual activity report to serve as the basis for evaluation. The categories, *ranked in decreasing order of importance*, are as follows (emphasis added).
 - *Program and Activity Relevance*: Documentation that outreach and extension efforts focused on important needs of audience served. Evidence that the outreach and extension efforts led to improvement in knowledge, practice, or other measurable outcomes. Evidence of leadership is demonstrated by other's accomplishments that were impacted by faculty member. Success in marketing programs to new and traditional audiences.
 - *Program Delivery*: Documented use of state-of-the-art techniques and innovative approaches that maximize benefits from outreach and extension efforts.
 - *Collaborative Activities*: Demonstrated leadership for interdisciplinary teams in carrying out outreach and extension efforts.
 - *Recognized Professional Achievement*: Includes refereed publications, honors, awards, exhibitions, prizes, invited papers and presentations, grants and contracts activities.

Evidence of excellence in outreach and extension is defined in Regulation 05.20.8 as follows.

- Development and implementation of a coherent and focused outreach and extension agenda in at least one area of recognized need. There should be a continuity among

program ideas, rather than an unrelated array of activities. Efforts should be focused on societal issues recognized as important by clientele and other external audiences.

- Continuous improvement in the field of concentration as demonstrated through increasing and updating skills, keeping abreast of clientele needs, and developing and applying relevant new knowledge. Outreach and extension activities that include original research and truly extend the knowledge base of a discipline should merit particular attention in the evaluation process.
- Effective contributions to the local area, state, and/or larger society by producing innovative materials and new approaches to solving problems. The emphasis should be on specific impacts and demonstrable measures of excellence (both quantitative and qualitative). It is also important to recognize innovative efforts that may have not been that successful, but which meet other criteria of excellence.
- Regular dissemination of applied knowledge relevant to outreach and extension activities. An appropriate combination of mass media and scholarly outlets should be included. Electronic and print media, as well as interpersonal interaction, are all important. Efforts should focus on the mechanism that best addresses the identified needs.
- Effective leadership as demonstrated by substantial recognition by peers and clientele at the local, regional, and national levels. Leadership refers to the ability to inspire, influence, and guide others. Evidence of leadership may include: supporting letters (described below); awards and honors; and invitations to participate in regional and national forums or advisory committees.
- Evidence that the faculty member is making significant contributions to the application of new knowledge and practice within the discipline and society. This includes outreach and extension activities that are: cited in professional publications or the mass media; shown to have impact on public policy; and/or demonstrate innovative approaches to linking theory with practice.

3. A discussion of how faculty RPT candidates can document their scholarly E&E accomplishments is beyond the scope of this editorial. To assist reviewers, faculty members who engage in E&E activities must develop a portfolio that illustrates the excellence of their scholarship and captures the significance of their accomplishments. Perhaps their greatest challenge will be finding mechanisms for evaluating individual efforts on a team. RPT is an individual sport -- it is not a team effort. Yet, collaboration is often a significant part of a successful E&E program. For RPT purposes, it is critical to identify faculty members who have

made significant contributions to the team effort, as opposed to those who have benefited from the freeloader effect.

The opinions and viewpoints expressed in this article are the opinions and viewpoints of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions and viewpoints of the individuals and organizations who support FFCI.

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Carol A. Schwab, Editor of *FFCI*, Professor and Extension Specialist, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, NC State University. In 2000, Professor Schwab served on the Faculty Senate Select Committee on Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure at NC State University. This committee reviewed the existing RPT guidelines at NC State University and recommended modifications to the process that were designed to give it consistency, clarity, and transparency. As a result, NC State adopted the Six Realms of Faculty Responsibility to recognize the value of all forms of scholarship. The Six Realms are: (1) teaching and mentoring of undergraduate students, (2) discovery of new knowledge through discipline-guided inquiry, (3) creative artistry and literature, (4) technological and managerial innovation, (5) extension and engagement with constituencies outside the university, and (6) service in professional societies and within the university itself. Professor Schwab also has served at NC State on the first three University Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committees, 2000 - 2003.

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