The Evolving Role of Faculty:
Traditional Scholarship, Instructional Scholarship and Service Scholarship

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Abstract

Faculty workload decisions made by a departmental unit often create a conflict for faculty because promotion/tenure decisions usually focus primarily on individual scholarly achievements. This paper describes an approach to faculty evaluation that considers both departmental and individual needs by expanding the view of scholarship to include Research, Instruction, and Service.

Keywords: Faculty evaluation, scholarship, research, promotion and tenure.

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of South Alabama is a comprehensive university located in Mobile, Alabama. The School of Computer and Information Sciences (CIS), one of nine academic units reporting to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, offers a Bachelor of Science with specialization in one of four areas: Computer Science (CSC), Information Systems (ISC), Computer Engineering (CPE), and Information Technology (ITE). The four specialization areas share a common core of the first two-year courses and a common senior capstone experience. A Master of Science with specialization in CSC and ISC is also offered.

In 1990, the School of CIS began a two-year examination of its faculty evaluation process. The result was a document that clarified expectations, permitted self-scoring, eliminated surprises for annual review, and formally established a relationship between annual review and decisions involving promotion, tenure, and retention (Feinstein, 1996). Influenced by the views on scholarship expressed in Boyer (Boyer, 1991), the document also acknowledged that faculty could submit other forms of scholarship for promotion-tenure decisions. Although the process has met our objectives, it was based upon a research-faculty model that we believe is out-dated.

Recently, the School of CIS has been confronted with a number of new challenges involving Instructional, Research, and Service oriented faculty. These include:

- A diverse, non-traditional, commuting student population and a dramatic increase in enrollment resulted in a demand for new course offerings and multiple course sections for daytime and evening programs throughout the year.
- Technological advances and competition for students created a need for delivery of courses through a distance-learning format.
- The redesign of the graduate program resulted in an increased need for research faculty to teach graduate courses and direct theses.

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- Successful grant funding resulted in reduced teaching loads.
- Response to market demands for a new specialization area, Information Technology, resulted in an increase in administrative functions.
- Greater community involvement with industry partners resulted in an increased service commitment.
- Industry demand for computing and technology professionals made it difficult to recruit qualified faculty.
- Accrediting guidelines resulted in teaching load constraints for faculty.
- Budget constraints imposed by the university resulted in a freeze on new faculty lines.

These challenges have raised questions that are fundamental to the culture of every academic unit. We have identified several questions:
- How can the three-fold mission of the School (Instruction, Research, and Service) be met and ensure quality in all areas?
- Because annual performance evaluations, promotion, and tenure reviews must be done, how do we compare faculty who are asked to primarily focus on a single mission area?
- How can tenure decisions be made that do not damage the ability of the unit to meet its obligations, and yet avoid inconsistencies that affect faculty morale?

To solve these dilemmas, a proposal for three faculty models was prepared and brought before the faculty of the School of CIS for discussion. Guidelines for this new view of scholarship are under development for tenure, promotion and retention decisions. The three faculty models focus on Research, Instruction, and Service areas. Although each model is distinguished by different expectations, a common feature is the requirement for a scientific and scholarly approach, innovative ideas, and tangible results to document successful activities.

The proposal was influenced by Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered, Priorities of the Professorate* (Boyer, 1991) in which he identifies four views of scholarship: the scholarship of *discovery*, the scholarship of *integration*, the scholarship of *application*, and the scholarship of *teaching*. In our proposal, which differs from Boyers's model, faculty may be hired for a specific role or choose to move between roles over time. The assessment of scholarship identified in our proposal is similar to the model posited by Glassick in *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (Glassick, 1997).

The remainder of the paper will describe our approach to implementing this view of scholarship, which should be of interest to any academic administrator facing these similar problems.

2. OBSTACLES TO SUCCESS

The Faculty Dilemma
The School of CIS currently has eighteen full-time faculty members composed of thirteen tenure-track faculty, five non-tenure-track faculty (NTT). Adjunct faculty primarily teach service courses. Tenure, promotion, and retention decision for tenure-track faculty have been based on scholarship, collegiality, teaching effectiveness, and service. Tenure-track faculty have operated with traditional research expectations leading to scholarly publications.

The fundamental dilemma facing this faculty is: How to determine teaching and service workload assignments that fulfill the needs of the School of CIS without creating obstacles to individual success and while maintaining a standard of scholarship for promotion, tenure, and retention decisions?

Workloads
Although the expected teaching load is twelve (12) semester hours for full-time tenure-track faculty and fifteen (15) semester hours for full-time NTT faculty, the actual teaching load is constrained by several factors.
- Accreditation: The Computing Science Accreditation Board (CSAB) accredits the computer science specialization (CSC), and constrains the teaching load for any faculty teaching any courses that support this area. Because all specialization areas share the first two years, these constraints apply to ALL CIS faculty.
- Grant Funding: Faculty funded for research have a teaching load reduction commensurate with the funding level. While funding leading to scholarly publication benefits both the individual and the School of CIS, this also has an impact on options for course offerings.
- Administrative Service: The current faculty assigned to administrative responsibilities are a Dean, three tenure-track faculty who function as specialization area coordinators (chairs), and one NTT faculty who manages an internship program. This requirement raises two constraints: 1) load reduction for administrative services and 2) lack of time for traditional scholarship.

Scholarship
Decisions involving promotion, tenure, or retention can affect more than the research mission of a unit. In our situation, tenure and promotion decisions are pending, affecting ten of our thirteen tenure-track faculty. Of the six untenured faculty hired with a traditional research expectation, two have instruction-oriented assignments and one has service-oriented assignments. Of the four tenure-track faculty eligible for promotion, two have instruction-oriented assignments and one has service-oriented assignments. With a difficulty recruiting qualified faculty, a non-tenure decision could have a serious impact

on the teaching or service missions of the School.

Proposal

We propose three definitions of scholarship based on Research, Instruction, and Service. It is reasonable to expect scholarly achievements that are in harmony with assignments and responsibilities.

3. THREE FACULTY MODELS

Three definitions of scholarship are the basis of the faculty models. The scholarship areas focus on Research, Instruction and Service. Current faculty must choose their preferred area and develop a plan that outlines ideas, implementations, and outcomes. Acceptance into a particular focus area depends upon the strength of the faculty plan and the overall needs and resources of the School of CIS. New faculty will be recruited according to School needs.

Each focus plan must anticipate the standards of scholarly work as described in *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (Glassick, 1997):

- Goals must be clearly stated.
- There must be a demonstration of adequate preparation for the proposed work.
- The methods chosen must be appropriate to the proposed work.
- The anticipated results must be of significance to the proposed work.
- Consideration must be given for the most effective means of presenting the results.
- A reflective approach for improving future work.

Additionally, each plan must: (1) identify targeted scholarly journals and publications appropriate to the focus, (2) include a reasonable timeline, and (3) include an annual submission for acceptable external funding. Focus plans will be reviewed and approved by the faculty member, the Dean, and the specialization coordinators. Annual faculty evaluation, promotion, and tenure deliberations will include accomplishments outlined in the focus plans. Successful faculty will be allowed to continue to operate according to updated focus plans. Otherwise, the faculty member may be directed to another focus area, changes in focus must be consistent with School needs. External funding awards may result in additional load reduction; but because teaching is one of the central missions of our university, the minimum teaching load will be one course each semester.

4. FOCUS AREAS

Research Focus

This is available to faculty who can support a traditional research mission. Faculty awarded this focus will be assigned a teaching load of two courses per semester. The initial assignment is for two years. Course assignments will attempt to match research directions.

Instruction Focus

This is available to faculty committed to instructional innovation and improvement. Normal classroom activities (e.g. teaching, grading, etc.) are not scholarship activities of this focus area. Rather, the scholarship focuses on instructional improvement through innovation and experimental curriculum development. Tenure-track faculty, awarded this focus will be assigned a teaching load of three to four courses each semester.

Service Focus

The focus applies to faculty who have a special role in School of CIS management. The identified roles are the coordinators, internship program manager, and faculty with specific advising duties. These duties are defined by the Dean as needed and subject to change to meet the dynamic nature of the unit. Scholarship in this area requires continuous monitoring and improvement of the administrative functions. Reporting upon innovation is encouraged.

5. THE CURRENT PLAN

This plan was developed by the Dean and coordinators and presented at a recent faculty retreat. The discussions indicated an awareness of these problems and a concern for solutions among the entire faculty. In general, the faculty accept that a departure from the past is needed and await more specific implementation details.

As expected some tenured and tenure-track faculty expressed interest in either a research or instruction focus; some indicated that they liked both. NTT perceived their focus as primarily instruction focused but expressed an interest in limited research activities.

It is hoped that this proposal provides the faculty a clearer understanding of the activities and expectations for the various evaluations that are required. Tenure, promotion, and retention evaluations can be more clearly performed because of this new process.

6. REFERENCES

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