The New Scholarship and the Work of Faculty: From Adaptation to Transformation of the Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure Process

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Abstract

Systems for reappointment, promotion, and tenure of university faculty have long been part of most institutions of higher education; tenure has been equated with the preservation of academic freedom. Recent demands for faculty accountability challenge the assumption that tenure is of value to society. Changing demographics of students and faculty call into question systems of reappointment, promotion, and tenure, which rest exclusively on research and publication. Guided by Boyer's ideas (1990, 1996) of a new scholarship, the authors of this paper engaged in collaborative inquiry to define what it means to be a scholar. Acting as the Faculty Affairs Committee of a college, we generated recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure and established new criteria for faculty evaluation. This paper frames, narrates, describes, and interprets our transformation of the new scholarship. Tenure remains as the basis of academic freedom, while expanded criteria link the process of reappointment, promotion, and tenure to both society's needs and to the demands of a flourishing epistemology.

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Introduction:

The purpose of this study is to describe the conceptual and practical uncertainties inherent in rethinking the work of reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) decisions[i]. This study was conducted in the United States in one of the eight colleges and schools in a mid-sized university with approximately 9,000 full-time students, 950 faculty and 1800 staff. Our college is part of our state's only university-level institution, which blends the academic heritage of a private university with service missions in the land-grant tradition. At the time of this study, there were three departments in our college: the Departments of Education, Integrated Professional Studies, and Social Work. The authors were members of the Faculty Affairs Committee for the college from 1997-1999. We represented the above three departments and were charged to study and develop RPT processes and criteria to be applied across all departments of the college.

In this article, we tell our own story of developing a broadened concept of what counts in RPT decisions from the perspective of a land-grant university in the United States. Our guiding philosophy was Boyer's idea of a new scholarship (Boyer, 1990, 1996; Fraser, 1994; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997).

Our motivation stemmed from the persistent feeling among our faculty that RPT was, in the end, about juried publications and faculty networks in the context of extraordinary loads in teaching and service. In other words, reappointment, promotion or tenure was not truly within the control of the individual faculty member.

Defining the New Scholarship

Founded upon a belief in academic freedom, systems for reappointment, promotion, and tenure have long been part of most institutions for higher education. Faculty have been protected against threat or sanction in their pursuit of knowledge and have been allowed great freedom to teach and study whatever they want. As expressed by Tierney (1997), "Colleges and universities are seen as places that advance understanding; without the professoriate's freedom to stretch boundaries and limits, society is at peril" (p. 18). Academic freedom, however, was not equated with job security until the establishment of tenure, or the right to hold on to one's position. According to Tierney, the concept of tenure engendered a system that helps to clarify and formalize individual faculty rights and responsibilities as well as the roles and obligations of the institution. Theoretically, the expectation was that faculty would engage equally in teaching, research and service. In the last half of the twentieth century, however, academic culture came to require research as the primary criterion for achieving tenure. In a way, this system could be viewed as a three-legged stool with the research leg supporting the majority of the weight of tenure.

Many faculty members believe, as stated in the Officers' Handbook of the University of Vermont, that "[t]enure is an indispensable pre-condition for academic freedom" (1996, p. 16). Academic freedom, in turn, is viewed as essential to the building of a more just society (Boyer, 1996; Rice, 1997; Tierney, 1997). Since the 1980s, however, society itself has begun to question whether tenure affects the degree to which

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universities can respond to the demands of society (Chait, 1995). In academic, political, and media forums around the country, the merits and worth of tenure have been repeatedly discussed, debunked, and challenged in ways that threaten its very existence (Boyer, 1990, 1996; Chait, 1995; Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997; Premeaux & Mondy, 1996; Schön, 1995; Tierney, 1997).

While the tenure debate proceeded, both the work and the composition of faculty changed. In 1996, Guskin noted that more than 200 colleges and universities were discussing the need for restructuring so that they could learn how to do more with less. He suggested that faculty, administrators, and trustees would either lead these change efforts or be forced into them by external agencies and groups. Schuster (1996/97) studied demographics in higher education and found the following changes: (a) approximately 30% of regular faculty had seven or fewer years of experience in academe; (b) women comprised 40% of the new entrants compared to approximately 28% among senior faculty; (c) of the new cohort, 16% were persons of color compared to 11% of the senior faculty; and (d) only 67% of the new cohort were in tenured or tenure-track appointments compared to 84% of their senior colleagues. Schuster also found that the percentage of part-time faculty had increased from approximately 30% to 42% in the preceding decade. These trends translated into a rapidly shrinking cadre of core faculty members.

Student-to-faculty ratios increased, along with both internal and external pressures for colleges and universities to become simultaneously more cost effective and responsive to societal needs. These factors increased faculty members' responsibilities for teaching (more students) and service (societal demands), restoring the traditional three-legged stool of faculty work. Tenure processes, however, continued to demand that faculty members demonstrate that they could balance exclusively on the leg of research and publication before they would be assured of job security.

For example, researchers in the field of social work education found that social work faculty were engaged in scholarly inquiry, but few published in peer-reviewed sources (Fraser, 1994; Hull & Johnson, 1994). McMurtry and McClelland (1997) found that social work student enrollment had increased since 1981. The number of full-time, tenure-track faculty had declined, and the number of part-time faculty had increased, but not in proportion to the number of students. As the authors stated, "Social work has a ratio of MSW students to full-time MSW faculty that is twice as large as the comparable ratio for psychology or communication sciences" (p. 304). Interestingly, none of these studies related the challenge of this increased ratio of students to faculty as a possible explanation for why there is considered to be only a "small core of prolific scholars" (Fraser, 1994, p. 257) in that profession.

Economic pressures, changing demographics of students and faculty, and demands for accountability from state legislators and university trustees led to a broad dialogue about what it means to be a scholar. In 1990, the late Ernest Boyer, then the president of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, called for enlarging the perspective on scholarly work. Historically, he explained, the prerequisites for scholarship focused first on teaching, second on service, and third on research. The latter half of this century saw the focus narrowing, until the term scholar came to be reserved for a person who engaged in research and publication. Boyer challenged the professoriate to move beyond this limiting, linear hierarchy of functions to a more

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interactive and comprehensive understanding of scholarship that is less rigid, more flexible, and more inclusive.

In his work, Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate (1990), Boyer outlined four forms of scholarship. He defined the generation of knowledge through which we confront the unknown and seek understanding for its own sake as the scholarship of discovery. The scholarship of integration refers to the serious, disciplined work that seeks to interpret, draw together, and bring new insight to bear on original research. Here connectedness, interdisciplinary and interpretive work are important. The scholarship of application denotes the dynamic process through which knowledge is applied to help solve individual and societal problems, going far beyond the concept of service as good citizenship. Finally, Boyer saw the scholarship of teaching as both educating and enticing future scholars. It required that professors be widely read and intellectually engaged so that they were not only transmitting knowledge, but transforming and extending it as well. Boyer emphasized that theory leads to practice and that practice often leads to theory, and that "[t]eaching, at its best, shapes both research and service" (p. 16). In sum, Boyer's vision of scholarship suggested a revised standard for conducting academic work that both encompassed and transformed the traditional areas of teaching, research, and service.

In a journal article published soon after his death, Boyer (1996) suggested yet another aspect of scholarship. He challenged colleges and universities to reconnect their generation of knowledge with the "social, civic, and ethical problems" of the nation (p. 19). Restoring our scholarship of engagement, he said, would enrich both the academic and civic cultures in "a special climate in which [they] communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other" (p. 20).

Adapting the New Concept

As the Faculty Affairs Committee for the college, one of our group's charges was to develop recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure (RPT) criteria and procedures for the college. Traditionally, criteria were used that operated at the university level, incorporating adaptations by the college's Faculty Evaluation Committee and/or standards for RPT articulated by one's field, e.g. social work, counseling. Since 1994 the college had attempted to define standards for RPT through task forces and committees. Though several documents were created, no action was taken. The dean of the college asked our committee to continue this work. This study frames, narrates, describes, and interprets the two years of work that resulted in recommendations for our college level RPT criteria.

This article includes the following sections. First, we summarize information resulting from our review of published and unpublished literature related to the new scholarship, as well as the policies and procedures for reappointment, tenure and promotion used in several institutions of higher education. Second, we describe the methods used by this committee. Third, the results of our study are delineated, including the recommendations for broadened and balanced criteria and processes related to teaching, research and service. Finally, we conclude with a series of questions that remain to be answered, both in our own college and within other institutions of higher education.

Boyer's tenets matched the beliefs and values of the majority of faculty members in our college. However, our committee found that the traditional faculty reward system

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within the university still prized publications over teaching, and formal research by individuals over collaborative action research resulting from engagement. Despite debates and informal documents within our college, individual faculty members had no guarantee that their peers would know how to evaluate either the teaching and service aspects of their professional portfolios, or their scholarship conducted under alternative paradigms. Obviously, there are some risks when faculty choose to aspire to contemporary standards of scholarship and are later evaluated by persons adhering to more traditional standards. An example cited by Schön (1995) underlined our concerns: an individual was not granted tenure because colleagues had no basis for understanding his scholarship.

Convinced that we needed to redefine scholarship and the nature of faculty work in our college, our committee explored the literature for effective strategies for change. In Guskin (1996) we found a model that reflected the process being used by our new university president. Guskin suggested that organizational change in higher education requires working in four areas: the rational, social-interactional, psychological, and political. Especially pertinent to our efforts were two of his recommended five practices for success, using internal expertise as much as possible and supporting risk-takers. Within the college, we had both the potential for stronger community and untapped expertise in organizational development. We realized that our faculty needed to agree on basic strategies to reinforce our professional community (Schuster, 1996/97), and to develop shared responsibility. Faculty members would become proactive about problems that confronted them, rather than reactive to solutions suggested by administrators or committees (Tierney, 1997).

Mindful of Guskin's (1996) advice to support risk-takers, we realized that we needed to discuss with colleagues how to develop and maintain a sense of communal respect for faculty work (Tierney, 1997). We found one example proposed by Padgett and Begun (1996), who described a collaborative, nonhierarchical approach to supporting the scholarship of social work faculty. Their model was developed by and for faculty who perceived that writing barriers posed a threat to their career development. When teaching and committee work impinged on writing, faculty gave one another writing assignments with deadlines, helped one another with teaching duties, helped vulnerable faculty get reassigned, and initiated a "Just Say No!" stance to help faculty respond to non-writing requests. When family responsibilities impinged on writing, faculty shared care for one another's children, supported each other in prioritization of conflicting responsibilities, and created on-campus writing time.

Protecting the risk-takers also had implications for preserving tenure. As Tierney (1997) noted, it is imperative to retain tenure if faculty are to remain intellectually curious, competitive, and free. Tenure currently provides a structure that supports academic freedom: "The point here is not what best serves the individual or even the institution; it is rather what best serves society's interest in creating conditions most conducive to scholarship" (p. 23).

We then turned our attention from the social-interactional and psychological areas of change to the political and rational, adopting three steps outlined by Diamond and Adam (1993). First, the department must become the unit of planning and evaluation. Second, a system of individualized performance planning keyed to departmental mission as the basis for faculty roles, evaluation, and reward must be developed. Third, chairs and

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their faculty must develop written performance criteria that articulate standards of excellence in teaching, research and service. To make it work, we knew that we needed to gain the support of administrators at the department, college and university levels, and to develop promotion and tenure standards that fit the unique missions and contributions of our various departments (Lidstone, Hacker & Oien, 1996). As a college-wide committee of the faculty, our role was to lead that process by providing guidelines that could be adopted as the foundation of our shared community.

Finally, we looked for models for evaluation of the new scholarship. Tierney (1997) recommended that faculty use reflexive assessments to create a culture that looks forward rather than backward, and outlines what individuals and the organization want to achieve. In Restructuring the University Reward System (1997), the authors called on universities to shift the focus of faculty work so that teaching, service, and research are equally rewarded. They suggested that faculty should be permitted to choose a teaching, research, or service focus for their major area of expertise while maintaining some level of success in all three areas. Expanding on Boyer's concept of the new scholarship, Glassick, Huber and Maeroff (1997) provided us with clear examples of the qualities of a scholar, the process of setting standards for scholarly work and documenting scholarship, and the challenges of implementing criteria for evaluation.

From Adaptation to Transformation Pursuing Engagement

We began our committee's work as an effort to adapt our college's policies and procedures for RPT in response to both external societal forces and internal changes within our university. In this process, however, we also discovered that our efforts to be responsive to these factors raised one of our most fundamental tensions: Were we trying to fit into the traditional tenure mold while trying to change the mold in the process? (Driscoll & Lynton, 1997). Over the course of the two years, it became increasingly clear to us that the changes we were promoting were more fundamental than adapting to the external and internal forces upon us. In many respects, we were engaging in a collaborative transformation of a culture of research and publication in which our tenure system was embedded.

We defined the standards upon which we intended to build our new policies and procedures for RPT, and outlined the document and performance criteria against which judgments about quality could be made. As we worked, we found ourselves rethinking our roles as faculty and finding validation in the ways that our teaching, research, and service are integrated into the scholarship of engagement. What became clear for us was the idea that our professional lives are well represented by our engagement with society, and that this engagement needed to play a part in RPT decisions.

Committee Methods

There were four members of the College Faculty Affairs Committee, three females and one male. According to our college bylaws, each member of the committee had been nominated by other members of the faculty at the same rank and then voted on by all members of the college faculty. Therefore, our committee consisted of one person at each of the following ranks: Lecturer, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Professor. Our committee met regularly throughout two academic years (1997-98 and 1998-99) and periodically throughout three summers (1997, 1998 and

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1999). One committee member (on a rotating basis) kept minutes of the meetings, which the other members reviewed and approved between meetings via electronic mail. Minutes were then posted via electronic mail to all members of the college faculty to encourage their reactions; few comments were received through that process.

During the first year, committee members reviewed research on the topic, developed ideas and procedures through brainstorming, discussed and debated issues and divided committee work among all members. Through those processes our committee developed several drafts of our work until we were satisfied that we had a complete draft. This draft was mailed to members of the college faculty two weeks prior to the first meeting of that academic year (1998-99).

During that meeting, the committee presented a brief overview of the document, summarizing its recommendations for changes in philosophy, content, and process. Each faculty member attending was given a feedback form, and asked to write his/her responses to three questions: (a) What do you like about this document? (b) What are your concerns about it? (c) What needs to be clarified? Discussions ensued in randomly-selected small groups, notes were taken, and essential concerns reported to the assembled group.

One committee member analyzed the content of individual and group responses to the three questions used for evaluation. Many faculty members praised the committee's work for its clarity, good fit with their own values, and comprehensiveness. Others used terms such as respectful, coherent, flexible, helpful, and ground-breaking. The university president commented, "I hope that other groups of faculty will study this work and create versions of it appropriate to their disciplines". Two areas where additions were requested were ethics, and standards from differing disciplines within the college.

Faculty members expressed concerns in philosophical, political, and practical realms. Philosophically, the major area of concern was the potential for losing the traditional definition of scholarship through grounding the document in the new scholarship. Others questioned the applicability of the term scholarship to such functions as chairing a department or committee or mentoring new faculty. The most pressing political issue concerned department autonomy and acceptance of these policies by the rest of the university, external reviewers, and other institutions where faculty might seek positions. Practical issues included suggestions for clarifying the document and implementation concerns. We presented a summary at a faculty meeting late in the fall of 1998.

Based on this information, each committee member selected a portion of the document to revise. These revisions were integrated into the document by the whole committee through a collaborative writing process. As a result, the second complete draft was submitted to the faculty at an April 1999 meeting. Based on faculty discussions and reactions, we made two major changes. First, rather than force a vote which would require college-level approval, we revised the wording in the document to support department autonomy and emphasized that departments that did not have their own criteria for RPT or preferred these could choose to adopt these criteria or use their own. Second, the members of our committee acknowledged a transformation in our thinking from a traditional/modern view, e.g., forcing a vote of acceptance of this report, to an alternative/postmodern view, embracing our report as a living document. A third complete draft was prepared and disseminated in May. During the summer of

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1999 we requested editorial recommendations from a senior faculty member and incorporated them in a final version, which was submitted to the College Faculty Executive Committee in October 1999.

The Executive Committee is a cross department committee that plans and conducts business at college faculty meetings. With the report in its hands, the Executive Committee learned that one department objected to college-level standards for RPT since they had already developed their own criteria and processes; also, their national accreditation standards required that they maintain autonomy over such matters. Faculty from this smaller department worried that their identity within the college and within their national field would be compromised by a college-level document that required college-wide RPT criteria. Rather than bring the RPT report to a vote, the Executive Committee decided to bring the report to the faculty as a topic for further discussion noting the above objections. It was unacceptable to the Executive Committee that possible tensions between departments be created by a vote in which the majority of faculty members overwhelmed or silenced the objections of one department. In the discussion of our report at the next faculty meeting, several alternatives were discussed that preserved the integrity of the report as well as the small department. The alternatives supporting departmental autonomy regarding RPT processes and criteria were being further discussed at departmental and college levels at the time of this publication.

Changing the Mold: The Committee's Model for RPT
Criteria and Processes

We recognized that scholarship needed to be broadly defined to represent the variety of interests and multiple ways of knowing presented by our community of scholars in the college. Another focus of our work was forging a closer linkage to institutional and community needs (Tierney, 1997) by demonstrating how a faculty member's scholarship supports the mission and purpose of our college. We acknowledged in our new policies and procedures for RPT that the process for documenting and presenting scholarship is similar across all forms of professional work, and that diverse scholarly activities can be subjected to similar measures of quality.

A contribution of our new model is that it adopts the new meaning of scholarship (Boyer, 1990) by applying it to the traditional areas of teaching, research, and service. The faculty are asked to view their teaching and service, as well as their research, as a form of scholarship and to present it as such at times of reappointment, promotion, and tenure.

The case for the intellectual attainment and scholarly contributions of teaching and service presented our biggest challenges. Much like Shulman (1993), we worked from the premise that the scholarship of teaching and the scholarship of service are activities that transform knowledge into enhanced understanding and application for the community of scholars, students, and clients we serve. We also believe that teaching and service can be powerful ways of fostering new knowledge.

To enable this, our model asks that a faculty member identify his/her scholarly agenda, which becomes a major component of the materials submitted for evaluation. This change raised some key questions. What can be submitted as evidence of scholarship in teaching and service? How will this material be reviewed and evaluated

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and by what criteria? How will the candidate distinguish between what is to be reviewed as scholarship and what is to be reviewed as effective work in teaching and service? Materials submitted as evidence of scholarship are subject to two sets of measures, Document Criteria and Performance Criteria. These criteria allow faculty to present their work in such a way that it can be reviewed externally to the department, college, or university.

Document Criteria

In order to identify document criteria, our committee first defined teaching, research and service, then developed sets of characteristics for each type of faculty work. For example, teaching includes scholarly functions that (a) transmit and transform knowledge, (b) relate to improved student learning, (c) connect teacher understanding and student learning, (d) involve continuing self-development and growth in knowledge, (e) occur not only in classrooms, but also in a variety of settings, (f) mentor students and other faculty, and (g) provide academic advisement for graduates and undergraduates. These functions serve as guides in considering specific documents one might include in his/her professional portfolio, to be used as evidence of scholarship in teaching.

Each area — teaching, research, and service — has document criteria. What is new, at least in the case of teaching and service, is providing evidence for scholarship in these areas, especially when the evidence represents nontraditional materials, e.g. syllabi, committee memberships and contributions, and samples of student work (Glassick et al., 1997).

Performance Criteria

The premise that common criteria for performance can be applied across modes of scholarly work is based on the idea that scholarship is inherently a form of inquiry. As such, its evaluation is based on the extent to which the candidate's work exhibits rigor, clarity, and depth of thought. Our committee adapted a set of criteria from Glassick et al. (1997) for quality and significance in performance: (a) clarity of purpose, (b) knowledge of the field, (c) appropriate methodology, (d) significance of the findings, (e) effective communication, and (f) self-reflective critique. These standards can be applied to teaching, research, and service.

Processes Documenting and Evaluating Scholarship

In our model, the candidate's execution of his/her professional responsibilities is a necessary condition for RPT, including documentation of participation in traditional research endeavors. A second necessary condition is the documentation of scholarship in the candidate's teaching and service. This documentation is presented in a narrative Professional Profile. Herein lies the essential characteristic of the new system. The candidate provides a scholarly agenda that describes the area(s) in which s/he wants to be evaluated for the quality of his/her scholarship, and references documentation as evidence of scholarship.

The Scholarly Agenda and the Professional Profile

The candidate's statement of her/his scholarly agenda in the Professional Profile refers to that work which, in the case of promotion, would be sent out for external review. As indicated by the Performance Criteria, this is work the candidate wants

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evaluated as inquiry in teaching, research or service. The scholarly agenda delineates a set of serious intellectual pursuits that engage the individual faculty member; it states the manner in which the scholar's activities in teaching, service, and/or research relate to his or her field of knowledge. One's scholarly agenda evolves over the years to reflect changes in professional inquiry and varying emphases on teaching, research, and service. Scholarly work also varies among faculty, with differential weight given to teaching, research and/or service. The faculty member must define clearly her/his primary area(s) of scholarship. Because the documentation will not necessarily be in the form of published work, it is critical for the candidate to explain the quality and significance of the work in addition to quantifying or categorizing the work.

Presenting Scholarship

Whether for reappointment or promotion, it is the faculty member's responsibility to present materials for his/her primary areas of scholarship so that they can be evaluated against the performance criteria. For promotion to the rank of Associate or Full Professor, faculty will be reviewed externally as well as internally in those primary areas of scholarship. Given the breadth of potential documents, the candidate's letter to reviewers must describe clearly the range of materials to be considered for evidence to scholarship, as well as the processes and criteria to be used in their evaluations.

Departmental expectations apply for every RPT decision, including the expectation that the candidate's assignment include participation in research, e.g., as consultant, in data collection, or other functions. When research is identified as a primary area of scholarship, the candidate must document his/her role as primary investigator, resulting in juried publications.

Where teaching is identified as a primary area of scholarship, additional documentation is required in the Professional Profile over and above the standard observations, syllabi, and student evaluations. Faculty members must document their teaching as a form of inquiry that can be reviewed by others, internally or externally. Similar documentation and review processes are required if the candidate identifies service as a primary area of his/her scholarship.

In other words, the candidate must provide a thorough explanation of how the documentation meets the performance criteria for RPT.

Discussion

As a faculty in a college of professions, our teaching, our research, and our service each claim significant parts of our energy, thought, and commitment. As a committee within that college, we have worked to define criteria by which the multiple activities of our professional lives could be evaluated as scholarship with a rigor equivalent to that of a juried publication. This scholarship may then serve as a basis for reappointment, promotion and tenure.

In our approach to evaluation, the individual faculty member is held accountable to standards of inquiry identified in his/her scholarly agenda, delineating those aspects of work that s/he wants appraised as scholarship. This choice brings with it the responsibility to document and explain the scholarship in a manner that is understandable to external and internal reviewers. In review, evaluators apply performance criteria

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developed by Boyer's colleagues (Glassick et al., 1987). It is an approach in which making a difference in the community is valued (scholarship of application) along with the research publication (scholarship of discovery).

Is what we have proposed possible? Traditionally promotions have been grounded in juried publications that are the result of research. This remains a primary route to RPT. In addition, our model makes it possible for faculty members to carry out and document any aspect of their legitimate work such that others could evaluate it as a form of inquiry. This alternative RPT route represents an expansion, synthesis, and transformation of what has been valued both within the institution and without, responsive to the needs of society while expanding the magnitude of knowledge.

However, the feasibility of evaluating unpublished writing according to performance criteria, and the subsequent issue of utilizing reviews is untested. A college's faculty evaluation committee must judge the candidate's work according to reviews unsupported by publications in refereed journals. Is there objectivity enough in the review process such that these decisions do not become perfunctory? Is there objectivity enough such that review can be rigorous and not subject to routine challenge?

Judgement by one's peers in the field, objectivity, anonymity, generality—these are the standards of knowledge in an epistemology of science. When a faculty member works with the community, with students, or with peers, then documents and reflects on that work as his/her scholarship, these standards do not apply as cleanly. The faculty member is a player, and the players are known, and what is learned or accomplished is specific to the context in which the inquiry is carried out. The standards of this local inquiry are the standards of clarity of purpose, knowledgeability, appropriate methodology, importance of the work to the community of persons from which it originated, dissemination to appropriate audiences, and self-reflection. These are the standards of knowledge in a practical epistemology. Our approach to faculty evaluation is intended to embrace both scientific and practical epistemologies, and in so doing embrace the diversity of work carried out in the name of a college of professions. This is the scholarship of engagement.

Lessons of Our Committee Service

A practical epistemology applies to our work as a Faculty Affairs Committee, and as the authors of this paper. We did not know initially that the nature and credibility of our report would be a function of the sincerity and comprehensiveness with which we initiated and maintained overlapping discussions with our own committee and the faculty of the college. This is our first lesson: Our work would have come to naught if the problem solving did not cut across all groups. As reported in the beginning of this paper, consulting the literature on faculty evaluation was an ongoing, constant source of ideas, affirmation, and warning for us. The meetings with faculty in individual, small group, program, department, and college settings focused our work and kept all informed of our progress.

Our second lesson is the flip side of the first. These discussions revealed the intellectual, political, and personal concerns of those who would be affected by our work. Interdepartmental, interprofessional, interrank, and interpersonal differences of opinion forced us to reconsider the assumption that there could be one way of evaluating all faculty. We might have foreseen that our college's diversity could not be cleanly

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accommodated in a common evaluation process. We rest with a product that will most likely be considered for adoption by separate departments. All or some may adopt what our committee developed, or they may adapt it to their own needs. It is quite clear that we do not, and did not, own this report; nor does anyone else within the college. It is a document that will get used in different ways, but it does not represent a single, common set of recommendations for RPT.

As a third lesson, we confronted the idea that our transformative thinking masks the conservativeness of maintaining the status quo. Earlier we asked, "Were we trying to fit into the traditional tenure mold while trying to change the mold in the process?" (Driscoll & Lynton, 1997, p. 25). Over the course of the two years of our committee's work, it became increasingly clear to us that the changes we were promoting were more fundamental than adapting to the external and internal forces acting upon us. In many respects, we felt we were engaging in a collaborative transformation of a research-publication culture in which our tenure system has been embedded. Still, our proposal does not ask the question about the validity or viability of tenure, only what might count toward it.

This article is the result of our scholarship in the course of our service on the Faculty Affairs Committee. We remain committed to the belief that it is possible and of value to reward the diversity of work as forms of scholarship when it is undertaken, reported, and evaluated as scholarship. This article was equally conceptualized, written and revised by all four authors. We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of our colleagues in the College of Education and Social Services at the University of Vermont, which assisted us in transforming the reappointment, promotion and tenure process.

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[i] The term reappointment as used in this article and in the United States is consistent with the Canadian term appointment. We acknowledge that there are some similarities and differences among Canadian and American university and college systems. We invite our readers to adapt and utilize aspects of this article to their own settings.

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